THE CHALLENGE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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THE CHALLENGE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

By

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PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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FOREWORD

What the public school system is to the state the Sunday school is to the Church. The educational function of the Church is carried on largely through the Sunday school.

When Christ gave the command to His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, He added, "Teaching them." There can be no true preaching without an element of teaching, but all teaching cannot be included in preaching. Teaching carries with it two distinct ideas: the direct and personal character of the message, and the catechetical form of instruction. The Church has both her preaching and her teaching service. The Sunday school is the Church teaching. The justification of the Sunday school can be traced easily to the command and example of our Saviour.

Within the past ten years a voluminous amount of literature on the history and work of the Sunday school has been published. The result is that not only has every aspect of the activity of this institution been fully covered, but there has also been given it a new estimate and value. The Sunday school looms larger than ever before. Its appeal is

stronger. Its place and function in the onward march of the Christian Church are everywhere recognized. It is challenging the services of our most talented men and women.

It would be presumptuous to claim that anything new will be found in these pages. The author has attempted to indicate the dignity and place of the Sunday school, and to re-emphasize some of its fundamental principles and aims. Methods are not discredited, only they do not find large place here. They are secondary, and we have endeavored to put first things first.

One cannot engage in Sunday school work for any length of time without being impressed with the need of calling its leaders back to first principles. No amount of material or intellectual equipment can take the place of ample spiritual furnishing. The Holy Spirit can make some use of an unworthy instrument; He can make more use of a weak instrument; but He can make most use of a well-trained and fully consecrated instrument. The motive, purpose and aim of what we do must be kept steadily before us.

At the request of the editor of *Lutheran Church Work,* the author prepared a series of articles on the Sunday school for that peri-

odical. About the same time the Lutheran Board of Publication requested that he deliver several addresses on the same subject before our five theological seminaries in this country.

These articles and addresses form the basis of this small volume, which amplifies and gives to them a more popular as well as a more permanent character. It is intended for those who are interested in the Sunday school, and for those who are not. It touches upon problems that rise above anything that is of purely local interest. It shows that he who goes into the Sunday school steps up, not down. May it serve, in some measure, to help us see and seize the opportunity the school of the Church offers us, and inspire us to do the best of which we are capable.

THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., 1916

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The Challenge of the Sunday School

I

THE HISTORY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

In these pages we shall ordinarily use the popular name for this institution—the Sunday school. Some very good arguments could be advanced why it would be better to call it the Bible school; and others equally good why it might be called the Church school. Indeed, these alternatives have gained currency in certain quarters, whether to the advantage of the school or not, it is impossible to say. One name may better describe an institution as to its functions than another, but that may not make it more effective. Its effectiveness depends on the amount of intelligent thought and life we put into it.

We dare not forget that the Church is the mother of the Sunday school, for whose larger usefulness and swifter propagation the school has been called into existence.

The school is of the Church, by the Church, and for the Church. It is not an independent institution. It is literally the Church school, or the school of the Church.

Then, too, we must remember the textbook of the school is the Bible. The school is a distinctively religious institution. And the Bible has the first and last word to offer on religion. Whatever takes attention from this book is foreign; whatever exalts it and makes its message pertinent and pointed, may be introduced. But it holds the center.

Each of the names proposed for this organization emphasizes one of its features. But no mere name can give it potency, or make it fulfill its mission, or save it from disintegration. Its content and efficiency will come from our right thoughts concerning it and our proper attitude toward it.

1. Before the Time of Robert Raikes

History will continue, as in the past, to accord to Robert Raikes the unique distinction of being the founder of the modern Sunday school. His part in the creation of this institution, which has been an agency of the Church for untold good to practically all lands, none will dispute. However, the Sunday school would scarcely be any less a potent factor in our religious life to-day had

Raikes never been born. It was ready to spring into existence at a hundred places in Europe and America; indeed, it had come into being in not a few churches. The germ and principle of the Sunday school go back to the beginning of the human race, so that it is not inaccurate to speak of the Sunday school before the time of Raikes.

Rabbinical literature abounds in references to schools of religious instruction under Methuselah, Shem, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Elisha and Hezekiah. What proportion of these writings is authentic it is impossible to say. That they have more than a grain of truth in them one can easily believe. The brevity of the sacred Scriptures precludes us from knowing just how thorough the system of instruction had become. But there are sufficient references to convince us that the indoctrination of both young and old, in the revealed will of God, was paramount in the period of the patriarchs and later. Recent excavations in the East show us that Bible texts and sacred hymns were a part of the school work of that day. Nor was this the case among the Jews alone. Religion had a conspicuous place in the educational systems of Babylonia, Egypt, Assyria, China and India. Schools were connected with the temples, and those who be-

longed to the priestly classes were the teachers. Many interesting traditions which tell of the place accorded religious education in the life of nations have been confirmed by inscriptions on rock and clay tablets which have been brought to light by the industrious excavators.

More than a few significant suggestions are given us of the work done by Abraham, Moses, Jehoshaphat, Elijah, Elisha and Ezra. No other commandment was laid more frequently on the hearts of the leaders in Israel than that of teaching the law. It is unthinkable that religious education, except in periods of eclipse of faith, was haphazard and sporadic.

Students of the school system in vogue among the ancient Jews are agreed that the modern Sunday school is based upon the Bible school connected with the synagogues. Dr. H. F. Cope writes: "The regular synagogue service itself was almost an exact prototype of the early Sunday school. The service consisted of the public recitation of passages calling on the people to remember the law and the words of Jehovah, the reading of parts of the law and parts of the prophets, the offering of prayer, and the giving of a formal benediction. The Scriptures were read in the ancient tongue, and a trans-

lation into the popular dialect given, followed by a popular exposition." The history, traditions and literature of these people were subjects of thorough study, and were taught by one generation to another. As long as the word of God was faithfully taught, and not buried beneath a mountain of traditions and human requirements, the integrity of the national life was preserved, and the attempts by adjacent peoples at aggression were repulsed.

Long before the birth of Christ a chain of religious schools had come into existence throughout Palestine, so that almost every synagogue had its elementary, and, in many cases, its more advanced school. Attendance upon these schools was obligatory. No teacher was allowed to have more than about twenty-five pupils. If there were forty he had to have an assistant; if fifty, then two teachers were appointed. The Old Testament was the chief text-book. Pupils were required to begin with Leviticus, then followed the remainder of the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Hagiographa. Both Philo and Josephus testify to the existence of a complete religious school system in Palestine in the days of our Lord. Geikie writes: "It cannot be doubted that boys' schools were already general in the time of Christ." The temple at

Jerusalem was the place where sacrifices were offered, but the hundreds of synagogues throughout the length and breadth of the land were so many centers for the promotion of Bible study. For the first half dozen years or so the pupils were allowed nothing for study but the text of the Scriptures. Afterwards they took up the traditional writings and commentaries. "Text-books" and "lesson helps" were provided. Copies of the Scriptures in whole and in part were available for use.

In addition to these elementary schools which met daily, the Sabbath excepted, there were the synagogue Bible schools, which were in session on Saturday, and also on Monday and Thursday, "in order that the country people, when they came into town to do their marketing, might have the privileges of religious instruction." Two services were held on the Sabbath, one in the morning for worship, and the other in the afternoon for Bible study. The former was called the preaching and the latter the teaching service. The organization of this Bible school was quite similar to that of our Sunday school. There was a chief officer, often a rabbi, with assistant officers and teachers. The school was composed of both young and old. The method of instruction was by questions and

answers. A careful study of the synagogue schools reveals a striking similarity between them and our Sunday schools.

The apostles had been Jews. The early Christian Church was made up largely of converted Jews. These continued to go to the synagogues and to send their children to the synagogue schools. The breaking away from old associations and methods was gradual. In course of time the growing hostility of the Jews toward the Christians compelled the latter to seek other quarters and to inaugurate their own program. But these Christians were not helpless. They were familiar with the school system of their nation. When they went out preaching the gospel their message was different from that of the Jews, but their method was not so different. The organization of the Christian Church was copied after that of the synagogue. The evangelists tell us that Jesus went throughout Galilee *preaching* and *teaching;* and these two are not the same. According to the terms of the Great Commission, the apostles also were to go *preaching* and *teaching.* Trumbull says: "The Bible school was the starting point of the Christian Church; and it was by means of Bible school methods that the Christian Church was first extended and upbuilded."

The powerful influence of religious instruction was felt for several centuries after Christ. The apostolic and post-apostolic fathers were great teachers as well as great preachers. Here again the Bible was the text-book. In not a few cases pupils could recite the whole Old Testament from memory. Lay members of both sexes were employed as teachers. The Bible school stood between the Church and the world. It was the gateway into the kingdom. The pupils were grouped in two, three or four classes, according to age and proficiency. Their studies were especially on the life of Christ—His birth, life, miracles, teachings, death, resurrection, ascension. The Old Testament was not neglected. In most instances thorough work was required. During the first centuries after Christ the Church had many distinguished religious pedagogues. Because of their efficient labors the Christian schools, toward the close of the fourth century, supplanted the schools of the Roman empire, "and from that time on, through fourteen centuries, with varying success, education remained a function of the Church." The dark ages were brought on largely through the neglect of the teaching function of the Church. The form in some measure was maintained, but it was robbed

of life through ridiculous superstitions and ecclesiastical corruptions.

The Reformation was an educational movement. The people were ignorant and superstitious. They were held in the deadly embrace of error. Luther, by the translation of the Bible, by the preparation of his catechisms, and by the writing of numerous books and tracts, provided a method whereby the German nation could be instructed in religion. Bible schools were formed and a campaign of education was systematically promoted. Had he depended wholly upon preaching his success could have been only a fraction of what it was. The importance he attached to the office of teaching is well known among us. He scarcely knew which he preferred for himself. By making provision for sound religious instruction he gave perpetuity to his work. His coadjutors and successors approved and adopted his policy. Melanchthon, Zwingli, Calvin and Zinzendorf were master teachers. All of them devised plans and created a literature for the encouragement of popular religious education. Luther appealed to the civil magistrates of Germany for the introduction of religious subjects into all the schools. He writes: "The strength of a city does not consist in the number of its towers and build-

ings, but in counting a great number of learned, serious and well-educated citizens." And further: "For the Church's sake Christian schools must be established and maintained."

Germany probably never produced a greater preacher and teacher than Philip Jacob Spener, who was born in 1635 and died in 1705. His influence, even when a young man, was almost nation wide. He gave special attention to catechetical and Bible-class work. So popular and powerful had been his catechetical lectures that he was induced by his friends to publish them. This he did under the title of "A Simple Exposition of Christian Doctrine, After the Order of Luther's Smaller Catechism." So superior was this compend that it was extensively used. Spener was instrumental in recovering the impressive rite of confirmation from the disuse into which it had fallen, and in giving it its rightful place in the Church. When he was but thirty-four years of age he delivered a sermon on the righteousness of the Pharisees, applying it to the hypocrisy of his time, which greatly aroused his hearers and showed them the necessity of a larger knowledge of the Bible and of a deeper experience in holy living. He, therefore, invited those who cared to do so to come to his home on

Mondays and Wednesdays for Bible study. When the meetings were well started they were attended by persons of all classes, including ministers, lawyers, merchants, doctors, mechanics, as well as those of humble station. Soon classes in Bible study were formed throughout Germany. It will readily be seen what a worthy champion of the effort to give the people a knowledge of the Scriptures Spener was.

August Hermann Francke, born in 1663 and died in 1727, with his "ragged Sunday school," antedated Robert Raikes by almost a century. He was troubled at the sight of the poor people who came to his door weekly for alms. He invited them into his house, taught them the catechism, and sent them home. But he was not satisfied. He sought among friends financial aid with which he purchased books and opened a school. He engaged a poor student as teacher, agreeing to pay him twelve cents per week for two hours' work daily. The school began its sessions at Easter, 1695. By mid-summer there were over fifty pupils. This work grew and led to the formation of schools with private tutors, and to the famous orphanage. With him all other subjects were made subordinate to the Bible. His work was a monumental triumph of faith.

The patriarch Muhlenberg, duly appreciating the method and success of Francke, imbibed his spirit and brought it with him to this country. When he was not preaching he was teaching. None who know the history of the Lutheran Church can dispute the statement that we have all along committed ourselves to the principle and practice of religious education. Gathering the young and old in groups and placing them under competent instructors is not a new thing with us. Luther, Francke, Muhlenberg and many others were the forerunners of Robert Raikes. Before his day also Sunday schools were founded in Scotland by John Knox in 1560; in England by Joseph Alleine in 1650. The earliest Sunday schools organized in the United States were in Ephrata, Pa., 1639; in Roxbury, Mass., 1674; in Plymouth, Mass., 1680; in Bethlehem, Conn., 1740; in Philadelphia, Pa., 1744. Raikes began his work in 1780.

It will be seen, therefore, that both the principle and the method of the Sunday school are very old. The springs of all great movements lie far off among the hills of the past. Were that not true the splendid work of Raikes would not have found a prepared soil in which to take root and grow.

2. Robert Raikes, the Founder of the Modern Sunday School

Robert Raikes was born in Gloucester, England, September 14, 1736. His father was editor and proprietor of the *Gloucester Journal,* to which office the son succeeded in later years. The commanding position he held in the newspaper world opened up for him the large opportunity he needed to give wings to his Sunday school experiences and successes. In that day of limited facilities for reaching the public ear with new methods of religious work, it was not a matter of small consequence that his name was carried on the editorial page of a newspaper.

The origination of the Sunday school was not the first piece of merciful and philanthropic work Raikes ever attempted. When a young man he frequented the jail of his city and studied its miserable conditions. He used the columns of his paper to inform his readers as to what he had found, and succeeded in arousing public opinion to such an extent that the surroundings of the prisoners were improved. His heart was touched at the sight of wretchedness and sin.

It was half by accident that he was led to undertake the movement in behalf of the physical, mental and spiritual improvement

of poor children. He was on a business errand when he saw with his own eyes the squalor and sin in which boys and girls were living. Though unconscious of their own state, they were filthy and clothed in rags, wandering about the streets idle and swearing. The age was one of the darkest morally ever known in the annals of English history. Atheism, deism, infidelity and rationalism had combined to destroy the Church of Christ from the earth. All classes of society were corrupt and degraded. Dissipation and utter carelessness toward God prevailed. Christianity had reached its lowest ebb. Few Church schools were in existence, and where they were yet maintained more attention was given to forms than to the spirit.

In these perilous and terrible times Robert Raikes was born, lived and wrought. He was held by a passion to make things better. He determined to begin with the children. It was in July, 1780, that he opened his first school, which was located in Soot Alley, Gloucester. It was an experiment, but was begun with faith. At the first he hired four women, to whom he gave a shilling each per Sunday to teach the boys and girls who might be gathered together. Rented quarters were secured for the first classes. The children

were supposed to come in the morning and remain until noon, and return again in the afternoon and remain until evening; in other words, from 10 A.M. to 5.30 P.M., with intermission for dinner and church services. They ranged in age from six to fourteen years. In the course of a few weeks as many as three hundred children were attending the school. Assistant teachers were provided, some of whom gave their services gratuitously.

Ignorance everywhere prevailed. There were no public schools. Probably more than ninety per cent of the poor people were illiterate. There were those in England who believed the prosperity of the nation depended on keeping the masses in ignorance. It was from this class that Raikes' schools were made up. The first thing necessary was to teach them to read and write. The primer method was introduced. It was necessary to begin with the alphabet. As soon as possible sentences were formed and lessons read from the Bible. The study of the catechism formed a considerable part of the curriculum. These elementary features constituted the major part of the work of the Sunday school for almost a quarter of a century. The system of public school education in England owes its beginning to the achievements of the

Sunday school movement. The revival of popular education was one of the by-products of the far-reaching propaganda fathered by Raikes.

Raikes himself was not any too sanguine as to the final outcome of the enterprise which lay near his heart and which had begun so auspiciously. It was three years after the work had been inaugurated before he published his first editorial in the *Gloucester Journal* on the subject of Sunday schools. His words were like a trumpet call. The *Gentleman's Magazine,* a paper of large circulation and influence, took up his words and sent them broadcast. The *Arminian Magazine,* edited by John Wesley, espoused the new movement, which spread from city to city and from church to church. The times were ripe for the introduction of Sunday schools, and God had ready the man who was to be His agent for its accomplishment. Among those who heartily seconded Raikes's work and co-operated with him were William Fox, Hannah More, William Wilberforce and John Wesley.

The Sunday school cause was, however, to meet with the most stubborn opposition from high ecclesiastical circles. There were those who thought they saw evil tendencies in it. They regarded it as an innovation and

without merit. They were outspoken in their opposition. Leaders within the Congregational, Presbyterian and Established Churches stood out against it. The archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Rochester, and others attacked the system. Conferences were called for the purpose of devising means of stopping it. Besides, it was no easy task to provide money to pay all the teachers required. In many places, and even in Gloucester, the schools had to be closed for a time from lack of funds. It was not long, though, before this difficulty was overcome. Teachers were soon offering their services free, but not until many thousands of dollars had been paid out in salaries.

Another difficulty arose, in addition to the unwillingness of official boards to grant their churches for Sunday school purposes, churches then standing had not been built with the material equipment necessary for running a Sunday school. Many schools were at first held in private homes, in halls, under railway arches, in attics and basements, or in any other place that was available. But not many years passed before the opposition began to die down, opponents becoming earnest advocates; and solution was found for the practical difficulties that stood in the way. The growth of the Sunday school movement

has been so rapid, and the good accomplished by it so vast, that we are compelled to ascribe it, both in its rise and progress, to Providence.

But why shall we call Robert Raikes the founder of the modern Sunday school? We saw that the germ of it lay way back in Judaism; that the synagogues had a complete system of religious education; that early Christianity had its church schools; that Luther and his coadjutors revived the practice of popular religious education; that Spener, Francke, Muhlenberg and many others had their Sunday schools many years before Raikes and almost identical with his. Why may history speak of him as its founder?

You will observe he is spoken of as the founder of the *modern* Sunday school. He is entitled to this honor: (1) *Because* while Sunday schools existed prior to the inception of his work, they were isolated and disconnected the one from the other, not any one of them giving rise to any general movement; (2) *because* under him, after nearly a century and a half of spiritual barrenness, interest in religion was revived and the moral sense of the people quickened; (3) *because* he was the first to roll the so-called Sunday school "idea into the world and have it catch fire." He saw its possibilities; he was a

prophet; he compelled others to see the greater school of the future; the schools of many of his predecessors ended in themselves, "while the schools he founded succeeded in giving birth to new ideals and taking such hold on the minds and sympathies of men as to secure their continuity and their unbroken development"; (4) *because* his wise and consecrated activity was the means of developing a popular impulse for the studying of God's word, in a systematic manner, under competent teachers; (5) *because* the Sunday school work, as we know it to-day, is traceable to Robert Raikes. When he had thoroughly tested his own plans he gave them currency through his *Journal,* and it seems as if half the world was waiting to learn of his experiments and put them into operation.

The notion has become somewhat current that, because Raikes began his work by teaching reading and writing, and employed salaried teachers, and gave articles of toilet and apparel in addition to good books as rewards, he was, therefore, prompted by secular ambitions chiefly. This is not the case. He was a spiritually-minded man. His private correspondence shows that the impulse that moved him was born of love to Jesus Christ and a passion for the souls of men.

The movement he headed was essentially a religious one. He desired to remove the filth and rags of the sunken part of his city, but he also saw the urgent necessity of a deeper cleansing. Youthful profanity aroused him. He set himself to stem the rising tide of immorality and ungodliness. He was the Lord's chosen instrument. He had compassion on the children of the slums. Having fed his own soul on the Bread of Life, he felt it his duty to feed others.

3. The Introduction of the Sunday School Into America

When the Sunday school, as founded and promoted by Robert Raikes, was imported to North America, it was planted in the world's richest soil. For, while there are about 30,000,000 officers, teachers and scholars in the World's Sunday School Association, nearly 20,000,000 of these are in the United States and Canada. This represents the growth of this organization in the northern half of the western hemisphere during less than a century and a quarter. Many of us are prepared to believe that the statistics convey a very inadequate impression of the full force and benefit of the Sunday school movement. It is impossible to reduce to cold figures the incalculable good that has

been accomplished by the introduction of this institution among us. Though many of our people did not know it—and among these were some of the most godly—the religious condition existing in our midst sent out one mighty appeal for something like what Robert Raikes had begun. The soil was prepared. The need was here.

It is by no means easy to say by whom, when and where the first Sunday school was introduced into the United States. There are many claimants for the honor. The credit probably goes to Bishop Asbury, of the Methodist Church; under his influence and direction a school was organized in Virginia in 1786. There is no record as to how long it continued in existence. At Charleston, S. C., in 1790, the Methodist Conference authorized the organization of Sunday schools, both for whites and blacks, with unpaid teachers. No actual work is traceable to this action. There is every reason to believe that not a few schools, founded in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, soon ceased to exist for one reason or another. Opposition was stubborn and persistent in many instances, and church doors were closed against this infant organization. With the data at hand, it would seem that the first school in Philadelphia was organ-

ized in 1791, in Boston in 1791, in New York in 1793, in Pittsburgh in 1800, and in Baltimore in 1804.

Sunday schools did not multiply with any degree of rapidity until societies were formed for the systematic promotion of the movement. The first of these was effected in Philadelphia, when a dozen Christian business men met for the purpose of considering the wisdom of establishing Sunday schools in the city. This was on December 17, 1790. In less than a month the organization was perfected and an effort made to plant schools. At the first, as in England, paid teachers were employed. The instruction was mostly from the Bible, in reading and writing, and for the purpose of securing "a reformation of morals and manners and a better observance of the Sabbath." This body was known as the First Day or Sunday School Society. Similar organizations sprang up in other cities and states, and soon the Sunday school had secured considerable momentum. Practically all denominations were represented in these provincial societies.

There came to prevail ere long a feeling that wider co-operation was imperative if the largest results of the movement were to be obtained. In consequence of this sentiment the Philadelphia Sunday School and

Adult Union was organized on May 26, 1817. The union did effective work in at least ten states, and came to be recognized as the most potent Sunday school force in the land.

Seven years later, in 1824, this Union and other bodies were merged into the American Sunday School Union, which, in a few years, will celebrate its centennial anniversary. Its dominant purpose from the beginning has been "to endeavor to plant a Sunday school wherever there is a population." The formation of this union has proved to be a master stroke of wisdom and the means of widening the channels for the dissemination of religious education. We have some idea of the scope of its work when its officers tell us that in the past eighty-six years the American Sunday School Union has organized 121,038 schools—almost four for every day of every year—into which have been gathered more than 5,000,000 teachers and scholars. Whether or not the field of the Union is being contracted because of the increased denominational activity and efficiency, I cannot say, but there will be none to dissent from the statement that this organization has been, for three generations, one of the most potential factors in American Christianity. Its distribution of religious litera-

ture, including Bibles and Testaments, totals millions upon millions of dollars' worth.

It may be of interest to learn something of the origin of Lutheran Sunday schools in the United States. But this preliminary word first: Time and time again we have heard it said that Lutherans are slow. Frequently, we must confess, the shoe has been a perfect fit. True, we were not among the first to introduce the Sunday school into our churches. But this was not owing to our being slow, but to our being in the lead. Our congregations were the ones to need it least. We had been doing, for long years, practically the same thing, for we were teaching the Bible in the children's school, parochial school and catechetical class. Many of the pastors preached on Sunday and taught the children the Bible and the catechism on weekdays. The instruction of the young in matters of faith and morals was no new thing among us. The Lutheran ministers who had charge of the work in its beginnings in this country needed not to be impressed with the importance of the religious training of the young. They did this work as well as the largeness of the field, the scarcity of helpers and the inadequate means would permit.

Two German Sunday schools were organ-

ized in Philadelphia in 1804 and 1805. The first one was connected with the congregation of St. Michael's and Zion Church, and the second one grew into St. Paul's German Church. There is a strong probability that Sunday schools were started in Lutheran congregations in the South as early as 1812-1815. An abbreviated report of the sessions of the North Carolina Synod, in 1811 and 1812, shows that schools were encouraged and that circulars were sent to the congregations advocating the introduction of this work.

A Lutheran school was organized in Christ Church, York, Pa., in 1819; in Zion Church, Harrisburg, 1819, and in St. John's Church, Philadelphia, 1821. It will be seen that the Sunday school movement was in its initial stage in Lutheran congregations at the time of the organization of the General Synod in 1820, the first general body of Lutherans in America.

Sunday schools were of comparatively slow growth among us up until 1840, about which time St. Matthew's and St. James's Churches, New York City, and other influential congregations introduced the work. The latest statistics credit the Lutheran Sunday schools of America with 1,019,911 members—the General Synod having 311,-

222; the General Council, 321,945; the Synodical Conference, 157,645; the United Synod South, 40,412, and the independent Synods, 188,687. It must be kept in mind that many of our foreign-speaking Lutheran congregations maintain a parochial school, in which the Bible and the catechism have a prominent place. That accounts, in large measure, for the comparatively small Sunday school enrollment in many German churches. But no matter what the language, location or obstacles in the way, it is an unusual thing to find a church that does not have a Sunday school under its care. The one question which most presses itself upon us to-day is not the organization of schools, but the best way to operate them so that they may accomplish most for the kingdom of Christ.

4. The Evolution of Sunday School Lesson Courses

The question of lesson courses constitutes one of the most important problems of the Sunday school. From the very beginning of the movement, the titles, scheme and arrangement of the lessons have concerned all thoughtful students. The best wisdom of educators and of practical Christian men has been brought to bear upon the solution of the question of a proper Sunday school cur-

riculum, about which there has been and is to-day a vast divergence of opinion. Scholarship has never been a unit at this point.

In this work, as in every other, there are some men who are far in advance of their time. They are dreamers. They live in the uncreated days. And so long as almost a century ago there were those who thought and openly declared that methods and principles should be immediately introduced which we are just now beginning to realize. Teacher-training and a graded system had their warm advocates two generations ago. There is nothing new under the sun.

The Sunday school lesson course has had a most interesting development. It had its origin amid things crude, imperfect and unsatisfying. It partook of the times which gave it birth. We dare not judge its beginnings by its standards of to-day. A comparison would provoke a smile. All along the course of its historical development immediate needs and conditions determined its policies. There were six distinct steps in the progress of lesson building from the days of Robert Raikes unto the present time.

1. The Primer Lessons. At the beginning of the Sunday school movement, secular education was in its infancy. Public schools, as we understand them, were scarcely

known. Ignorance was everywhere prevalent. The mass of young people could neither read nor write. Little effort was made to gather the poor together and to educate them to be good and useful citizens. The origin of the Sunday school vitally concerned the prosperity of the state. Before it could impart religious instruction and place the Bible in the hands of its pupils, it had to teach them the rudiments of spelling, reading and writing. As soon as possible, lessons in the Bible and catechism were assigned. One of the first things Raikes did was to prepare for general use a manual of one hundred and twenty-five pages, containing twenty-five elementary lessons. As the public school system became perfected it assumed more of the responsibility for the general education of the youth, and allowed the Sunday schools to give themselves almost wholly to spiritual instruction. During this period there was no uniformity of lessons.

2. *The Memory Lessons.* When the Sunday school was free to devote itself to the pursuit of religious education, it gave the utmost encouragement to the memorizing of Scripture. Rewards were offered and astonishing results obtained. It was not unusual for scholars to come prepared to recite hundreds of verses and sometimes whole books

of the Bible. Little time was left for giving the sense of anything that had been committed. The partial failure of this method soon became apparent. It tended to prodigious feats of memory, but to little instruction in the way of life. This condition obtained even though the session of the school was prolonged for several hours. When possible, questions were asked and stories related. While the memory work was carried to extremes, it is worthy of remark that the memorizing of Scripture verses has become a permanent part of every system that has been promulgated.

3. The First Uniform Lessons. The work of the Sunday school was yet primitive. It was clearly experimental. Its leaders were groping for the light. While no attempt had so far been made toward general uniformity, the tendency was in that direction. Schools of the same city or community were coming to adopt the same lessons and methods, and it was a growing conviction in the minds of many of the pioneers that it would be a distinct step forward if all classes in all schools would make use of the same lessons at the same time. Sunday school unions in our own country were among the first to systematically popularize this idea. Their efforts soon gained ground, taking definite shape in

1824. At the first there was a one year's course, then a two years', and, later, a five years' course. A popular and extensive body of literature grew up around these courses. The American Sunday School Union played a conspicuous part in the development and propagation of the limited uniform system. Usually from ten to twenty verses constituted a lesson.

4. The Denominational Lessons. By the middle of the last century a strong denominational consciousness was developing. Systematic Bible study in the Sunday school helped to bring this about. Neglected creeds were being revalued. The deadly wave of rationalism was beginning to wane. Denominations, as such, felt they could best do their own work in their own way. Un-Christian rivalries and jealousies were not wanting. Conservatism was reasserting itself. Distinctive doctrines arose to their earlier emphasis. The more influential denominations prepared their own system of lessons with the interpretation thereof. These numerous systems were termed in certain quarters "Babel Systems." In the meanwhile the limited uniform system was being pushed. But the period was one in which the various bodies of believers saw anew their responsibility and opportunity,

and advanced their own interests.

5. The International Uniform Lessons. April 18, 1872, was the birthday of the Uniform Lessons, and is esteemed by many to be the greatest day in all the history of the Sunday school movement. The task of constructing a cycle of lessons that would give anything like universal satisfaction was a stupendous one. Insuperable difficulties threw themselves in the way. At one time the project was abandoned. But through the personal influence and heroic efforts of B. F. Jacobs, the heart's desire of multitudes was realized. The original plan was to cover the Bible in a cycle of seven years, dividing the time equally between the Old and New Testaments. This method was pursued for three cycles, or twenty-one years. Since that time six years constitute a cycle, three and a half years being given to the New Testament and two and a half to the Old. In that period the whole Bible is supposed to be covered in such a manner as to bring out its principal historical facts and spiritual truths. Each cycle is substantially the same as the preceding one. This must necessarily be so. In this course the American and British Sections of the Lesson Committee have agreed upon the same system of lessons. In commendation of the Uniform Series this may truth-

fully be affirmed; it has won the approval of the overwhelming majority of the Sunday school hosts of Protestant Christendom. For forty-four years it has held the right of way. This does not say that the system is perfect—far from it. It is but the impartial statement of an historical fact.

6. The International Graded Lessons. Without entering into the genesis of the graded lessons, suffice it to say that they are in existence and have attained considerable popular favor because of the profound conviction of an aggressive section of Sunday school lesson builders and students of child nurture. Though preliminary work of almost a decade had been done, it was not until the meeting of the International Sunday School Association at Denver, in June, 1902, that the graded system received anything like general recognition, though the principle of it was widely accepted. Committees were appointed to develop and perfect the proposed scheme. The work has gone rapidly forward, so that now we have a two years' course for beginners, a three years' course for the primary, and a four years' course each for the junior, intermediate and senior departments, making in all a seventeen years' course, carrying the pupil from the kindergarten age of four to twenty-one years. The

selection of the graded lessons has been in the hands of the International Lesson Committee. The first scheme of lessons contained no small amount of extra-Biblical material, such as historical, missionary and biographical studies. This venture of the committee called forth a storm of protest, the result of which was the selection of a parallel series of lessons based entirely upon Bible passages. Both are presented as optional courses. The British Section of the committee has never accepted the graded lessons in circulation on this side of the water. They have provided their own course, which is much simpler.

All of the larger bodies of Lutherans in this country have their own system of lessons, with the exception of the General Synod and the United Synod of the South. Some of these systems have been in use for years, are well developed and quite satisfactory.

5. The International Uniform and Graded Lesson Systems

The question of Sunday school lesson courses is a vital one to the General Synod to-day, and, in fact, to the whole Lutheran Church in this country. There is a feeling of dissatisfaction here and there which must and will be met. The General Synod, at its

convention in Washington, D. C., in 1911, passed a resolution authorizing its Sunday School Committee to enter into conference with other English-speaking Lutheran bodies for the consideration of a common Lutheran Sunday school literature. Two years later this action was reaffirmed, and the committee vested with authority and instructed to proceed conjointly with other Lutheran bodies in the construction of a series of Sunday school lessons. Two years later still similar action was taken, and the committee authorized to proceed with the preparation and publication of these common lessons. In neither case was this action hastily taken. It was the deliberate conviction of the clerical and lay representatives from all over our Church that something can be produced which will be more in harmony with our spirit and doctrine than what we are using at the present time. To the momentous task of creating such a literature the General Synod will be bending its energies in the years to come. The action referred to in this paragraph and the statements there made lead us to a consideration of the two lesson systems so generally in use among us.

There are two systems of lessons in use in our body, the Uniform and the Graded, both of which are selected and promoted

by the International Association. Each has its ardent friends, and each has made for itself a warm place in the hearts of our Sunday school leaders and workers. It is our purpose to indicate, very impartially, the strength and the weakness of both systems. Some of the best talent in two hemispheres has unstintingly devoted itself to the creation and improvement of lesson systems, which, it was hoped, would meet the needs of the Sunday school world. That they have not given us a perfect scheme does not surprise us. We are pressing on in the hope that we might attain.

The Uniform lessons came into being in 1872, and for these forty-four years have constituted the course of Bible study used in the vast majority of our schools. The Sunday School Committee, in a recent report to the General Synod, says: "We rejoice in the blessed work accomplished through the International Uniform Movement. We are loath to take any steps that would even indicate a purpose to separate ourselves from that movement." However strong may be our conviction that the Uniform system does not measure to Lutheran requirements, we would be untrue to our hearts' promptings did we not acknowledge the unique place it has filled in our Church.

Wherein is it strong? It offers one lesson for study at one time by all the schools the world over. There is inspiration at least in the thought that probably 20,000,000 pupils are studying the same passage of Scripture on the same day. It makes a teacher's meeting possible, for all use the same lesson. It gives unity of thought to the entire school, and permits the superintendent and others to select the hymns and build the prayers around this central thought. It places but one lesson in the home, where one lesson is more likely to be studied than many. It popularizes Bible study, for with one lesson the daily press may become and is becoming a mighty factor in disseminating religious truth. It has been the means of creating a voluminous literature on the Bible, and of enlisting in its service men of the most brilliant gifts and unquestionable consecration from all denominations. It has presented to the unbelieving world an illustration of interdenominational fellowship and spiritual unity that surpasses anything hitherto known.

Wherein is it weak? There are three serious, if not fatal, indictments to be brought against the Uniform system. *First,* it violates the fundamental principles of religious pedagogy and psychology in assigning one

lesson to all grades irrespective of age, condition or degree of mental development. There are lessons which it is next to impossible to teach to small children. *Second,* the Uniform system has been the prevailing course of lessons in Protestantism for well-nigh fifty years, and yet the ignorance of the Bible, even among those who have been in our schools for years, is as deplorable as it is alarming. The results have not been satisfactory. *Third,* the Uniform system opens the door of our Sunday schools and of our homes to lesson writers whose views, to say the least, are neither Lutheran nor evangelical. Not all who get hold of such literature can discriminate between the safe and the unsafe, the true and the false.

What of the Graded system? On it the Sunday School Committee of the General Synod happily says: "There can be no question but that the Graded lessons for instruction in the Sunday school rest upon right principles. The new International Graded Lesson System is admirable in many respects." It is in accord with the best rules of pedagogy. It believes in furnishing milk for babes and meat for strong men. It is an effort to meet the pupil on his level. It does not try to adapt the mind to the truth, but the truth to the mind. It is an attempt to

carry over into religious education the methods that have proved so successful in secular education. It combines both the topical and the textual methods of study. It aims "to meet the spiritual needs of the pupil in each stage of his development." It provides a distinct line of study for each year, thus giving the pupil something new to look forward to and sustaining his interest. It accentuates the impartation of knowledge through the hand and eye as well as through the ear. Because of its pedagogical soundness it appeals to public school teachers and enlists many of them.

But the Graded system, too, has its weaknesses. To our mind it emphasizes pedagogy at the expense of the Scripture. (Dr. A. B. Van Ormer's splendid work on the intermediate lessons is excepted.) There is not a little loose and destructive handling of the Bible. It exhibits tendencies which we as Lutherans cannot accept. Its errors of omission are as serious as those of commission. It has been prepared for all denominations and is scarcely satisfactory to any, having been to all intents and purposes virtually set aside by several of the largest. It is weak on sin, regeneration, conversion, the sacraments and kindred cardinal subjects. Its method of interpretation is too naturalistic.

Over against its skillful arrangement and attractive appearance must be set its doctrinal weakness. The sacraments are symbols only. Then, too, it is too complex. It is a practical impossibility for many schools, more especially for the smaller ones; and even some of the largest and best equipped are going back to the Uniform system. It sends too many lessons into the home. It tends to destroy unity and co-operation. It makes it difficult to secure teachers.

I know how pitiably inadequate is this treatment of two lesson systems that have meant and will continue to mean much to our Church. Space forbids anything more than a mere outline, which can readily be amplified by the reader. My purpose has been to show with the utmost candor that while both these courses are good, they are not the best. They are defective and need remedying. We believe in the motto, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." It will be the conscientious aim of the General Synod in whatever it does to retain, in so far as possible, everything that has proved useful, and to discard all that has been faulty. Experience is a fan, separating the wheat from the chaff.

I dare not anticipate what the General Synod Committee will do. But I may say

this: No scheme of lessons and no body of lesson literature will be acceptable to the Lutheran Church that is not absolutely loyal to the word of God. Material in this instance takes precedence to method, though we do not decry method. It is incumbent upon us to provide for our constituency, with which God has entrusted us, a literature that is in harmony with the doctrines of our Church. If this object can be attained best by the preparation of a system of lessons that shall bear the Lutheran imprint, our duty is clear; and it becomes doubly clear if it will be the means of bringing closer together the English-speaking Lutherans of this country. It is doubtful if a more critical moment, a moment fraught with larger possibility of gain or loss, has confronted our Church in the last twenty-five years, than this one. We need soberness, and, above all, the wisdom God's Spirit alone can impart.

Thus we see that the Sunday school is not a reckless upstart, or an intruder. It has not been thrust upon the Church as a burden, but providentially given her as wings. It has come among us as a helper, and deserves a place. While as to the methods by which it does its work it changes with each decade; in essence and principle it is as old as the race and as wide as the world.

II

THE PLACE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

This is an important question, and vital to the highest welfare of both school and Church. Our theory at this point is better than our practice. The co-ordination of the two organizations has not been carefully considered in certain quarters, and, as a result, they sustain an indifferent relationship to each other, lacking in sympathy and working co-operation.

The origin of the Sunday school under Raikes was unfortunate in this: It began its eventful career outside the Church. True, Raikes and those who seconded his experiments and built upon his foundations were Christian men, members of the Church, but the schools they organized were not related to the Church, had no direct contact with the Church, and were held in other than church buildings. Perhaps the deadening formality of the Church had something to do with this, but probably the fact that the movement as it began was as much educational, philanthropic and moral as it was religious had

more to do with its independent origination. Raikes looked upon his work in its initial stages as an "act of civilization." Be the causes what they may, the fact remains, and, in consequence, many of the leaders among the clergy and laity took an openly hostile attitude toward it. John Wesley was far-seeing enough to welcome the new-born organization into the Church, and urged pastors and laymen to appropriate and use the work Raikes had begun. He saw in the Sunday school a bundle of possibilities for the Church of the future.

But we have never quite overcome the tendency of the Sunday school to swing off from the Church. In spite of the earnest efforts to relate the two, each goes its own way all too much. So we find to-day that "Sunday schools among all Christian bodies exist almost as independent and individual units in church life, rather than as integral, well-articulated parts of the machinery of a properly organized system."

However, it should be said that when the Sunday school was imported to America, it at once found a home in the Church, was welcomed, approved and fostered by the Church, with some exceptions. So that from the very beginning it became the handmaiden of the Church. We have not, therefore, experi-

enced the difficulty in relating this organization to the work of the local congregations and to the interests of the denominations as a whole as did England. That may account in no small measure for the phenomenal success of the Sunday school propaganda in this continent, two-thirds of the world's Sunday school enrollment being in North America.

We do well in our personal thinking to arrive at correct ideas as to the relation that should exist between the Church and the Sunday school. This is fundamental. We cannot go forward to the success that may be ours unless we are clear on this point. If sympathy and co-operation be wanting, both will be immeasurably weakened.

I. What the Sunday School Is Not

1. It Is Not a Substitute

None will deny that hundreds and thousands of people regard the Sunday school as their church. They openly declare they have done their duty when they attend its sessions. And this applies to adults. The school is held in the church building, the Bible is studied, hymns sung and prayers offered, and they cannot see why it is not just as good as the church service. But they must be made to see. The Christian Church

needs no substitute, and can tolerate none. She is of divine origin, and man can put nothing in her place. If we have but one hour at our disposal it should be spent at the church service, no matter what our personal feeling or preference may be.

2. It Is Not Another Church

When Jesus was on earth He said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." So that the Church is one, not two. Loyalty to the Church implies loyalty to the school, and loyalty to the school just as strongly implies loyalty to the Church. They are not rivals, or competitors, each standing over against the other. To the Church has been entrusted the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The Church is the older and superior institution, and has a divine origin and sanction which cannot be predicated of the school as an organization, and without which the school never would have been born. For all efforts to promote Bible study, to secure a better observance of the Lord's Day, and to improve the moral and religious life, have sprung from the Church.

3. It Is Not an Independent Organization

The relation of the Sunday school to the Church is that of child to parent, of branch

to tree, of part to whole. That the school meets under the roof of the local church indicates its origin and ought to encourage, yea, impel, an intimate relationship. Those who feel that the school would make greater progress if it were independent of the congregation need to be set right. That would ere long happen which Jesus said would happen to a branch when severed from the tree. All tendencies to reduce the spirit of cordial co-operation and mutual helpfulness between the congregation and the school will in the end work harm. The spirit of democracy to be found in the school, and the constant lament that the room is overcrowded and more space is needed for the growing numbers, while the church service is all too often sparsely attended, make the task of keeping the school subordinate to the congregation a difficult one. The son may grow to be larger than his father, nevertheless he remains the son. The size of the school and the vast amount of work it does do not give it the right to run away with authority.

4. It Is Not an Institution

We are in the habit of calling the Sunday school an institution, and we shall continue to do so. But if we were clear in our thinking and accurate in our use of terms we

would apply this title to the Church alone. The Christian Church is *the institution* for the public propagation of the gospel. The Sunday school is an agency of the Church, just as the Young People's Society, the Brotherhood and the Missionary Society are agencies. They are channels through which the Church gives expression to her life and carries out her divine commission. They are special activities of that one institution into whose life we have been baptized and at whose altar we have been fed.

While speaking of the tendency of the school to get out of step with the congregation with which it is connected, and to think of itself as an independent organization, it may not be out of place to indicate another danger. This time it is the organized class. Every society that has possibilities has perils also. The organization of classes in the Senior and Adult departments is to be encouraged, but such classes must have their highest interests safeguarded or they will come to think of themselves as so many schools within the school. They have their president and other officers, and chairmen of committees, and feel dependent on no other person or organization. They are often self-sufficient and self-satisfied, with little regard or enthusiasm for the school

as a whole; and are loath to take instruction from the pastor or superintendent. In some cases they have objected to turning their offerings over to the Sunday school treasurer. Each class, whether large or small, whether of adults or children, whether in the same room or in separate rooms, whether organized or unorganized, is a constituent part of the school. There must be no friction, no aloofness, no indifference to the good of the school as a whole. The organization of classes among young people and adults has brought new life to many schools. Each class is an integral part of, and must be kept *en rapport* with the larger organization. The only objection I have heard to the organized class is that sometimes it fosters a spirit of semi-independence, and, therefore, weakens the school bond. Even the large men's and women's organized classes should be kept in as close touch with the school as conditions and the best class work will permit. It is utterly selfish for any class to think that its comfort and good alone are to be considered in the operation of a Sunday school, where often our personal wishes and even our rights have to be surrendered. We have gained much in the building of separate class rooms, but we have lost something too. The unity of the

school is not so easily preserved. Somehow we must make the feelings of mutual interest penetrate curtains and doors.

But let us return to our original line of thought. We have seen that the Church and Sunday school are not rival organizations. We have seen that the school is a part of the Church, belongs to the Church, and moves within the sphere of the Church. Whatever we may do to strengthen the friendly and helpful feelings between them will be a genuine contribution toward the advancement of the kingdom.

But a question of no less importance than the one just considered requires attention. We have been thinking of the school from the negative point of view. We have tried to show what the school is not. Now the more important question arises: What is the Sunday school?

II. What the Sunday School Is

The answer to this question will show two things: (1) That the Church has for a long time had a high conception of the worth of the Sunday school; and (2) that the leaders in the Sunday school movement have always thought of it as intimately and vitally connected with the Church, and existing only for her good. The phrases coined in the

effort to define the function of the Sunday school are not all of equal merit, but no one of them is wholly wrong. There has been an evolution of thought concerning this organization, and naturally there has been an improvement in our terminology.

1. It Is the Children's Church

The reader will object to this definition just as the writer does, but we are considering existing conditions and facts, and not wishes and ideals. And the school is going to remain the children's church, however much we may protest against it, until a revolution in thought and conduct is effected. Three things have served to affix this unfortunate name upon the Sunday school: (1) Until a decade or two ago the schools were composed of children, about the only adults present being officers and teachers; (2) few children are attending the preaching services in God's house, and unless the Sunday school is their church for a goodly number of years they in reality have none, for the time they begin attending the principal services of the church is about confirmation age; (3) since few children are found at the church services, Sunday school leaders have endeavored to make the order of service of the school as much like that of the congregation as possible,

so that the children might get from their service what the adults receive from theirs.

It is doubtless true that the children's church is the most unfortunate and unsatisfactory definition given the school. It is partial and misleading, and leaves the impression that the children are not expected to attend the chief services of God's house. On the contrary, they ought to be considered a part of the general congregation, coming with their parents to the united worship, sitting in the family pew, and being trained in the habits of church-going. But, as a matter of fact, how many unconfirmed children are found at the public worship of the Church to which you belong? We are not living in an ideal age. Conditions are not what we would like to see. But let us be thankful that we have the children in the Sunday school, the school of the Church, that the Bible is being taught them, that they are being instructed in right habits of worship; but, not being satisfied with that, pray and labor to the end that they may early become participants in the worship of the sanctuary. The Sunday school is no substitute for the Church, never was intended to be and never can be.

2. It Is the Nursery of the Church

This conception of the school is suggest-

ive, and points in the direction of great truths, especially dear to us Lutherans, who emphasize the imperative necessity of early religious training. Holding as we do that preservation is infinitely better than rescue, a cardinal principle with us has been the Christian nurture of the young. Now a nursery is a place set apart for the use and occupation of children. It implies tender care, proper oversight and faithful training. There is no other place where a church may find so many of her children gathered together as in the Sunday school. It is there, too, that religious ideals are fostered, spiritual growth is promoted, and faithful shepherding is given. Multitudes of children and young people have been saved from spiritual death because of the attention and instruction the school gave them. It has been a lifeboat to perishing souls.

The Sunday school, however, is not a nursery in the sense that it is the place where "irritated, selfish parents may send their children to be rid of them." That is a low idea of the school which views it merely as "better than the streets." It is not here for the purpose of relieving parents of their responsibility.

Neither is it a nursery in the sense that it is for children only. The term has become

objectionable in these later years especially, because our schools are filling up with young men and women and adults. And these are not particularly pleased to be told that the religious institution to which they belong is a nursery. They may be young in the faith, babes in Christ, but they desire to be thought of and dealt with as men and women. All partial and restrictive terms must be used with care, and our conception of the place and function of the school enlarged to keep pace with the growing service it is rendering.

3. It Is the Recruiting Station of the Church

This definition of the Sunday school is somewhat justified when we remember that from seventy-five to eighty-five per cent of the accessions to the Protestant churches of North America come through the Sunday school. This does not mean that none of these would have been won without the co-operation of the school. Where home training is what it should be, and catechetical work is faithfully carried on, there will always be large accessions. Nevertheless, if any pastor keeps an accurate record of the forces at work in the lives of those he receives into church membership, he will be impressed with the contribution his school has made. He is always getting those into his

catechetical classes whom he never could have hoped to reach except through the influence of teachers and other school associations. It is impossible to say how great the number of those for whom the school is the stepping-stone to the church, but that the number is great is very patent. One of the broadest fields of activity for the adult classes is the winning of men for Christ. The Sunday school in all its departments is enlisting those who will enter into the service of the church. Where there is a growing Sunday school there will be, under normal conditions, a growing church. The school does not exist for itself, but is a feeder of the church.

This word of caution—the figure of the recruiting station, we believe, over-emphasizes the matter of numbers. Such a place is where men are enlisted but not trained, and, therefore, the figure cannot be made go on all fours for our Sunday schools. Here and there are schools that have gone hysterical over numbers. Their slogan is, "Every person in the community enrolled in the Sunday school." How catchy and plausible it does seem! How worthy the effort of everyone! But the danger is that we shall keep our eyes fixed so steadfastly upon this goal as to overlook an order of procedure, a pro-

gram of religious education so solid and so worth while that the people of the community cannot afford to remain away. It is well and good to augment our numbers, but what are we going to do with them when we have them? In other words, are we giving an honest proportion of our thought and energy toward the sound religious development of those entrusted to our care? Enlisting them is one thing, holding them is quite another; and we will lose fewer of those we have when we build up a curriculum, a method, an *esprit de corps,* that challenges their interest and lodges within them a compelling power. A school is no further on if each time it enrolls a scholar it loses one; and it is very little farther on if when it enrolls *two* it loses one. I am pleading for the pupil who comes to our schools. He needs us as much as the one on the outside does. We have not discharged our full duty when we enroll him. Then our real work begins. The school must be a recruiting station and training school combined.

4. It Is an Evangelizing Force

To evangelize means to proclaim and teach the gospel of Christ, but especially with the view of converting to Christianity. If our Lutheran schools are taking advantage

of all their opportunities they have gathered into them some pupils at least who are not Christians. The great unchurched and unsaved masses of people in our neighborhood belong to our field as much as to that of any other denomination. It is our duty to seek to win them to Christ. Our schools have not done their share in the evangelization of the unsaved about their doors. We have stressed the baptism and Christian nurture of children, and so far we have done our duty. But that is only part of the Great Commission.

It is likely true that in all departments of the school are those who need to be born again. To all such the school is an evangelizing agency, for it has the Bible, which is the evangelizing power. Certainly the Lutheran school can do two things: it can with one hand hold those who become Christ's through baptism, and with the other hand it can bring the unsaved to a saving knowledge of Him. That conception of the school which looks upon it as an evangelizing force is not the least inconsistent with our Lutheran conception of the relation of the baptized child to the Church. This is no advocacy of Decision Day, or of any indiscriminate appeal to a class or a school to choose Christ. We owe something to the

unsaved about our doors as well as to the non-Christians in India and Africa. So long as there is one person in the school who is not saved, that school must be an evangelizing force if it is anything. For the gospel that keeps the saved is the gospel that converts the unsaved. The school that is not evangelistic is not evangelical. This subject will receive additional treatment farther on.

5. It Is the Church of the Future

There is prophecy in this definition, but prophecy back of which lies a century and more of illuminating history. The church of to-day was the Sunday school of yesterday, and the Sunday school of to-day will be the church of to-morrow. This could not be the case if the church and school were separate organizations. Those who are now receiving instruction in the school and are being taught more fully the gospel of the Saviour, will, in a few years, take the place of their seniors and be bearing the responsibilities of the congregation.

When Jesus looked on Peter for the first time, He said, "Thou art . . . thou shalt be." When we look into a school and see the bright, eager faces of children and young people, we begin to dream about to-morrow and their relation to it, and about the Church

and the part they will play in its extension. They *are* something to-day, to-morrow they *will be* something else, and, please God, something more. The future of any church is written in its school. Where her young people, and older, too, are taught the word of God and reliance upon Jesus Christ, trained in service, and led to form correct views and habits of life, there the Church is built upon the rock. The pupils under your care and mine to-day will, with true shepherding, take an active place in the work of the Church that is to be.

6. It Is the Bible School

Almost from the beginning there were a few who thought this a more fitting designation than Sunday school; but now the "few" have become a multitude. The Bible is the one and only text-book of the school. It is an unerring record of God's revelation to man through Jesus Christ. Of all the books crowding our libraries it alone tells us of the way of salvation, and becomes a channel through which the power of the new life is communicated to sinful man. The Bible school is a name peculiarly dear to those who accept the Bible as God's word, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. A staggering protest went up a few

years ago against a concerted effort to introduce into the Sunday schools lessons that were not taken from the Bible. It was not because there are not many religious subjects outside the Scriptures that we should be familiar with; but it was quite generally felt that inasmuch as the time for instruction in the school is only about thirty minutes, the whole of it should be given to the Book of books. The tendency anyhow among teachers is to run off to some irrelevant subject and neglect the lesson assigned. Some pupils get no religious instruction except what they receive at Sunday school—and it should be our aim to pour as much of Bible truth into their minds and hearts as possible. The name Bible school further implies that Bibles be used in the school. But more of this later.

7. It Is the Church School

This, to our mind, is the best definition of the Sunday school; it is the church school, the school of the church, the church assembled together studying the word of God. It is the educational department of the church. A Sunday school may be a Bible school without being connected with a church, or, at least, without close connection; but if it is a church school, it will be a part of the

church's regular work, under the supervision of the church, fostered and supported by the church, sharing in the life of the church, and laying its fruits in the lap of the church. Of course, rechristening an institution does not necessarily achieve all the results that may be implied in the new name. But it will help not a little if in our thinking we make the Sunday school the school of the church. It is the church's effort to supplement the home instruction and the pulpit ministrations by coming together for one hour each Lord's Day for a diligent, systematic, united study of the Bible. It is not to take the place of the home, or the class in the catechism, or the preaching service. It is to strengthen the hands of all agencies that were in use before the Sunday school came into being. When the announcement of the *Sunday school* service is made from the pulpit it has a strange and far-away sound and elicits little response; but if we designate it the church school, the church will begin to feel it is her own child and deserving of some parental interest. But whatever the name we employ, we must make it the church school, laying both the privileges it offers and the responsibility it involves upon the church.

We must remember, too, that it is a school. The entire arrangement and method leave

no doubt of the character of this organization. It is a school. The pupils are grouped according to age and ability into classes, each having a teacher. Sometimes these classes disperse to separate rooms; the Bible is the text-book; the lessons are adapted to the mental development of the child; home work is assigned, and the study is carried on by questions and answers. The first glimpse we get of such an organization tells us it is a school. Here the church is exercising her teaching function. Here instruction is primary, and that instruction is religious. It is the one agency among us to-day which can properly be regarded as specifically the school of the religious life. It is the one method by which the Christian Church is seeking to carry out the latter half of the Saviour's final command, "Go, preach . . . teaching them."

The school then, I take it, is an integral part of the church, set at the same task, burdened with the same commission, and functioning with all the other activities of the church. It is the child of the church, and their interests are one. When one suffers the other suffers also. When one succeeds the other rejoices and shares in the success. The church should not hesitate to assume the spiritual direction of its school, and the

school should just as willingly submit to such oversight.

III. How Secure the Attendance of the Sunday School Scholars at the Church Services

We have seen that the church and school are intimately related. We could not separate them without destroying the school and seriously retarding the growth of the church. The interests of each are wrapped up in the other. Each should, therefore, be expected to be most loyal to the other.

This all looks very well in print. As a theory it is beautiful. It is what we would like to see. If the school were as zealous for the church as it is for itself, would it conduct itself any differently? Ask the same question of the church. Why is it that there are not more church members at the sessions of the school, and why are there so few of the members of the school at the church services? Is there not evidence that the ideal relationship between the two organizations is far from being realized? Go where you will, and you will be asked how to bring the Sunday school into the church.

Since we are discussing Sunday school matters, we shall confine ourselves to the question of securing the presence of pupils at the

church worship. This problem is distressing some pastors and disturbing all. They realize that such presence is not only desirable, but that it is also absolutely necessary for the highest welfare of both church and school. We are told that the average school loses approximately fifty per cent of its membership from one cause or another. It is not probable that a very large proportion of this fifty per cent is saved to the church. As a rule, pupils cannot be held in the school unless they are gotten into the church; but how can they be gotten into the church in any vital and saving sense unless they are cultivating the habit of church-going? Hence it follows that the absence of scholars, both young and old, from divine worship is attracting wide attention and occasioning solicitude and unfavorable comment.

That something will have to be done is universally felt. To stand by the door after the dismissal of the school and see the streets dark with people wending their way home instead of going to divine worship, makes the heart sad. I was in a Lutheran school on a recent September morning. The record showed three hundred present. Most of these were children and young people. I at once thought there would be a good audience at the service which was to follow. And so

there was, for that down-town church; but it was a different audience. There were not two persons present under fourteen years of age.

There is one thing sure, the habit of church attendance must be formed in youth. As pastors, we will testify that those who have been irregular church-goers before confirmation are, as a rule, irregular afterward. They are the first to go into the column of "Other Losses." We cannot hope to save them from a life of sin and shame unless we save them to the church through regular habits of worship.

In the first place it should be said that those persons who go to Sunday school and not to church are not sinners above all others. They have not done their whole duty, but they have done part of it. It is far better to attend Sunday school alone than not to attend a religious service of any kind. They have done something for which they deserve recognition. It is easier to lead individuals into the active life of the congregation from the Sunday school than it is from the world. The habits they are forming are good ones, so far as they go, and the message they receive is not different from what is dispensed from the pulpit. These words are not set down with any thought of apologizing for

the absence of the Sunday school hosts from the principal services of the church or to encourage them in that direction. But it is well for us to appreciate what is already being done.

And I am not so sure that the people who go to Sunday school and do not attend church are sinners above those who go to church and do not go to Sunday school—if they can. One point of failure upon which we must lay our finger is this: the vast majority of our church members do not seem to be aware of the fact that the Sunday school is, or ought to be, the church at work studying the Bible. Not more than about twenty-five per cent of the confirmed membership of our congregations attend Sunday school. Quickly do we concede that many of them cannot attend. But there ought to be at least fifty per cent of the church members in the school; and the others should be in the Home Department. When a column of older people can be drawn up about the school, the rising generation will be more easily saved to the church.

There is a feeling in many of our homes that the Sunday school is for the children and young people, and the church service for the adults. The two groups meet, the one coming from school and the other going to

church. The adult classes are remedying this condition, or, at least, are in a position to do so. But large numbers of them do not remain for the preaching hour. There is a freedom and a cordiality in the school, the privilege of exchanging views about the Bible and its teachings, and of discussing questions relative to the religious life, and for these reasons the average man and woman are attracted to the school.

How can pupils be led to attend the church service?

1. By the Combination Service

In order to give the hour of divine worship the place it deserves and to secure a better attendance at it, some pastors are trying the combination service. Instead of having two separate and distinct services, they are merging them into one, which lasts about two hours. This method, I see, has been introduced into more than one thousand churches. The sermon and lesson study each takes about thirty minutes. Time is saved in having but one opening and closing service instead of two, and in having the announcements made but once. So far as the writer knows this plan is in operation in but a few of our congregations. He questions whether it will soon become popular with Lutherans.

Rev. S. P. Long, D.D., Mansfield, Ohio, has given this method a thorough trial, and says he and his congregation would not think of giving it up, it has worked so well. I give his order of service:

1. Teachers' prayer meeting, 9.25 A.M. to 9.40 A.M.
2. Organ prelude, 9.40 to 9.45 A.M.
3. Anthem, 9.45, followed by common service through the Gloria Patri, then hymn.
4. Ushers enter and sit in front pews.
5. Scripture lesson, creed and prayer.
6. Congregational offering.
7. Children's choir.
8. Announcements.
9. Second hymn—"Break Thou the bread of life."
10. Twenty-minute sermon—the best possible.
11. Short prayer.
12. Superintendent takes charge and *all go to classes*—the visitors go to classes too—if men, they remain in front of pulpit, where pastor teaches.
13. Buzzer in every room—first, to take offering; second, to return to auditorium while orchestra plays.
14. Report of the secretary and golden truth sent home to all by superintendent.
15. All who in the first service sing church

hymns, now sing two Sunday school hymns and stand while singing.

16. Lord's Prayer and benediction by the pastor.

The two hours seem like a few minutes to all.

2. By Making Plain the Divine Character of the Church.

The Church is a divine institution. Her service is the principal one. To her have been entrusted the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. She must stand and be supported though all else fall. The Sunday school is not a rival, or a substitute, or *another* church. Attendance upon it is not the whole of man's duty. Have we allowed the Church to slip from her divine level and to lose something of her glorious dignity in the eyes of our people? Has the solemn wonder gone from her courts and her name and meaning brought to the level of those agencies through which she works?

3. By Bringing the Church Into the School

Urge upon the members of the congregation the privilege and importance of their uniting with the school of the church. The large end of the answer to the problem under discussion lies in their direction. There is

not the least doubt that we will have more of the school in the church when more of the church is in the school. The adults must become the examples and lead the way in this matter. The young people reason after this manner: If our parents and other adults attend but one service, why shall we be expected to attend two? And if they attend the church service and not the school, why may we not attend the school and not the church service? When a column of the older people can be lined up about the school, the young people of teen age and under will not slip away when the hour of church worship strikes. The first step toward closer union of effort must be taken by the church. Her outspoken and evident interest in the school will react to her own good.

4. By Choosing for Officers and Teachers Those Who Are Faithful to the Church

They, above all others, are teaching by their example. We cannot expect pupils to go to church when their teachers go home. A word from the teachers, encouraging their classes to remain, will do good. It is a question whether a teacher ought to be retained if for any reason it is impossible for him to be present, at least with some degree of regularity, at the preaching service. His

message before the class may be strong, but it will break down under an example that is not consistent. His pupils will do what he does, and not what he says. And, after all, how much of a message has he for them if by his conduct he discredits the church in their eyes? Loyalty to the church in word and deed is one of the first qualifications of a teacher. A consecrated young woman who is a gifted singer and reader was invited to take part in a social of another church on a Wednesday evening. She declined the invitation, saying that it was the evening for prayer meeting at her church, and that some of the boys in her class would be present, and she did not want them to find her absent. They had been attending through her influence, and she knew they would stop going just as soon as there was seeming indifference on her part. Teachers as much as anyone else can help the church solve this problem.

5. By Having Teachers Bring Their Classes to the Church Service

This can be done. It has been tried with a considerable degree of success. Have teacher and class sit together just as they do in the school. Perhaps once a month would be frequent enough for this experi-

ment. Local conditions and results would determine the policy in large measure. The criticism that the plan leaves the impression that the school is wanted at the church service periodically is not a good one. In the first place, it is better to have them once a month than not at all; and in the second place, those same pupils will be seen dropping in at other services, for they have learned that there is much there that they can understand and appreciate.

6. By Keeping a Record of Attendance

Appoint two persons who know the membership of the school, and have them keep a record of the number of scholars present at church, and report it the next Sunday to the school. Or ask the scholars who of them remained for church service last Sunday, or who of them expect to do so to-day. A very successful pastor has the young people of his church furnish a selection of music at one of the preaching services each Sunday. He generally has from fifty to a hundred present. They occupy a reserved portion of the church near the front. If we approach the task of winning the young people with timidity and a fainting heart, we shall go on failing.

An effective method is in successful opera-

tion in the Trinity Sunday School, Johnstown, Pa. A special record book has been provided for use by the teachers. This book is ruled so as to give three columns for each pupil each Sunday. At the head of the first column stands the letter E., which means early; at the head of the second column stands L., which means late; while at the head of the third column stands C., which means church attendance. The method of marking is a simple one, and it has produced results. In learning how to mark column C. it is necessary for the teacher to ask a question of each pupil personally. If a pupil should answer negatively an opportunity is afforded the teacher for a persuasive word. The system has likewise reacted on the teachers and shown them the necessity for their being faithful at church. A careful record of results has been kept in this school, and it is found that eighty-three per cent of the pupils present in the Intermediate and Adult departments remain for the preaching service. This is more than twice the attendance before the introduction of the improved method. Many in the elementary grades also remain for the church service. The report of the attendance each Sunday is read before the whole school on the following Sunday. We know of no other school in

which such satisfactory results have been obtained.

7. By Restoring the Family Pew

In order to do this it is not needful to return to the rented pew system. The practice of parents and children sitting together is not as general as it should be. This is one form of family religion, and begets reverence and family solidarity. The separation of children from their parents tends to misbehavior, and misbehavior leads to the inference that they had better remain away. When you see half a dozen youngsters occupying the front pew, with no adult near, you may rest assured that someone is going to have a "good" time, but it will not be the minister. Those children should be scattered over the church with their parents, or older brothers and sisters. This plan would put an end to occasional disorder, which has led some people to frown upon the idea of children attending the church service.

8. By Giving Prominence to the Importance of Church Attendance

Keep the subject to the front. We can do anything, if we work hard at it. Some seemingly impossible things have been ac-

complished in the religious world. But it has taken long years to do them. The reason our schools are growing so rapidly, and adult classes are springing up in a day, and Bibles are coming to be used in classes, is because they are so much talked about. Impressing the duty of church attendance, in season and out of season, will not bring all the scholars to church, but it will bring not a few of them. Improvement is possible with the use of the follow-up system.

9. By Being Patient and Tactful

Do not scold. Threats to close up the school or to do something else just as unreasonable get nowhere. Human nature is so constituted that it can rarely be driven, but it can generally be led. Patience, tact and love are our angels of hope in all this matter. Time, too, is required to accomplish all we desire.

10. By Holding the School in the Morning

This is done at many places the year round. And one of the reasons is because it serves to swell the morning audience. Pupils, who would not come out for an additional service, will remain for it when the session of the school is held before the hour of preaching. Ministers immediately re-

mark about the presence of young people at church when school changes from afternoon to morning. If the disadvantages are not too many or too great, it is worth a trial. The gain in increased attendance at the morning worship would compensate for any slight falling off in the roll of the school.

The matter of church attendance is a serious one. We must approach it with confidence, with reliance upon God's gracious aid, and with the determination to win. The school of to-day will hardly be the church of to-morrow unless that school is to-day being trained in right feelings and habits toward the church.

III

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

When Robert Raikes interpreted the age in which he lived as needing moral and religious education, he read with the vision of a seer the need of the days far ahead of him. A nation that is godless cannot long endure. Physical and intellectual achievements are not the chief factors that make for the stability and perpetuity of a people. The Sunday schools, as soon as it was possible to do so, devoted almost the whole of their time to religious instruction, turning over to the public schools that part of their curriculum which dealt with secular branches. To-day this agency is purely religious in its method and material, and is a tremendous force in the development of the spiritual life of the nation. If it be granted that man is incurably religious, and that his education is not complete unless provision is made for the nurture of this side of his nature, then it follows that the Sunday school, under present conditions, is a necessary as it is a

national force. It has come to the kingdom for such a time as this, and whatever may be its imperfections, it is recognized as probably the greatest single educational agency in America to-day for the dissemination of religious knowledge.

1. Teaching the Bible

To show the importance of the Sunday school it might be sufficient to say that the Bible is the book from which instruction is given. An English editor once wrote to "the hundred greatest men in Great Britain," asking them what three books they would like to have with them if they were compelled to spend a year all alone, without friend or visitor. Out of the hundred, ninety-eight placed the Bible at the head of the list of the three books they would most desire. This is the book that is the text for study in the Sunday school. It contains exact history, thrilling biography, sublime poetry, unequaled parables, exquisite love stories, unmatched deeds of heroism, and many of the masterpieces of the world's literature; but the chief excellence of the Bible is to be found in the fact that it reveals God to man and makes known the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. It is through and through a religious book. It meets and satis-

fies all the spiritual longings of man at each stage of his development. We may know all other books and be ignorant, but if we know the Bible we are wise with a wisdom that cannot be put to shame. As long as the Sunday school stands upon the Bible and makes it its text-book, its place and importance in the sphere of religious education are assured. Its business is not so much to hold fast the word of God as it is to let it loose, and any institution that has that for its object is the Bible's strongest defender.

2. The Church Teaching

The importance of the Sunday school is further seen when we recall that it is of the Church and by the Church, and partakes of her nature, origin and glory. The Christian Church is the salt of the earth, the light of the world. She is the Lord's little flock, the vineyard of His own planting, the assembly of the saints, the pillar and ground of the truth, the body of Christ, the Lamb's bride, the one institution on the earth through which the kingdom of God is coming. Now it is to this Church that the Sunday school is vitally related, and we are to think of it as sharing in the dignity, the world-wide mission and spiritual character of the Church. It is not the offspring of a secular organiza-

tion, dependent upon the tide in the affairs of men. It is well-born.

"Is the Sunday school a divine institution?" is frequently asked. But two answers can be given, and both of them have their advocates. There is no definite command or authoritative word in the Scriptures for the origin of the Sunday school, as there is for the Church. Therefore, it is scarcely exact to declare the Sunday school is of divine origin. Yet it is safe to say that an institution that has God for its Father and the Church for its mother is not far from being divine. That its rise was providential none will dispute. Its history is sufficient evidence that it is not of man alone. In organization and outward form it is not divine, but in principle and purpose it is. It gathers its meaning, its authority and its place in the kingdom-building from the Church of which it is a part.

The practice obtains among us of making the Sunday school room a general meeting place. We try to preserve the sanctity of the church itself by using it only for the principal services. When there are sociables, or games, or hand-clapping, or loud talking, or meetings of a promiscuous and semi-religious character, they are confined as much as possible to the room in which the school holds

its sessions. And this is as it should be, unless there is a social hall for all such functions. We know how these things militate against that quiet, reverent and attentive mind with which we should come into the house of God. But do they not act precisely the same way with respect to the Sunday school room? Why is it that order and an attitude of worship are so difficult to secure? There are other contributing causes, to be sure. But do we not come to think of the school and the work it is doing just about as we think of the room in which the school meets? This is no lament. It is a plain, stubborn fact with which every pastor and superintendent is sorrowfully familiar.

There is nothing more difficult than to have the school realize the bigness, the sacred character and authority of its work. It will be helped to this if we can get it to feel that it is a part of the Church, back of which and in which is the Christ, that something of the same solemnity must be carried over into its work, and that the Bible from which the minister reads and which he expounds is the book which the school is to study. Let us put the Church first, but we are in no immediate danger of thinking of the school more highly than we ought to

think. It is important because it came from the Church, and belongs to the Church, whose work as well as whose reward it shares.

3. Training the Spiritual Life

The work of the Sunday school grows in importance as we contemplate the material upon which we work. It is nothing less than immortal souls. To mold clay is one thing, to mix colors and paint a picture is another, but to touch a human life, and, by the help of God, to deposit some seed there is quite another. When we build a house we know it will some day fall down; when we rear a monument we know it will crumble to dust; but when we teach and influence the child, or youth, or adult, we are just as certain that the material we are working upon is indestructible. The task of the school is no less than this. Look at it any way we will it is serious business. A soul is worth more than all the world. And to see hundreds of them bending forward drinking in the word ought to inspire even those who live on the lowlands. It is so natural for petty cares and small problems to shut our eyes to the magnitude of the work we are doing, that we go about it without heart. While those whose destiny is in the making—and whose

is not?—present themselves at the school for guidance and instruction, we have an opportunity which, for challenge and appeal, cannot be exceeded. It is by no means easy to see the spiritual possibilities that lie dormant in the trying boy or mischievous girl. But did not Jesus come in the flesh to give us eyes to see that very thing? It is not probable that any other view of the work of the school will long keep us faithful. While we are dealing with life, with human life, and with human life on its spiritual side, we must endeavor to preserve an adequate conception of the greatness of the work in which we are engaged.

We might rest the case here. No further statement is needful to indicate to any thoughtful person how important, how far-reaching the task of the Sunday school. An institution that has the Bible for its text-book, that is an agency of the Christian Church, and that has to deal with the souls of men, dare not be lightly esteemed. No individual, however great may be his talents or commanding his influence, ever steps down when he goes into the school of the church. He always steps up. The day is at hand when we are seeing that we never become too old or too wise to be found in the service of the Sunday school.

But there are other reasons why the religious training given in the Bible school is important. We desire to speak of these also. Most of them are to be found growing out of modern developments and conditions, and show the timeliness of the school and the increasing responsibilities which are being put upon it. There never was a time when the call from the school for large service was so loud and imperative as today; and never a time when faithful, consecrated workers were so much needed in it as now.

4. The Elimination of the Bible from the Public Schools

From the fourth century until comparatively recent times all education, secular as well as religious, was under the control of the Christian Church. That day is now past, at least so far as our country is concerned. But it was not so at the beginning. Religion had its place in our public school system. It was definitely provided for and stressed above all other studies. The founders of this republic had no thought of an educational system without religion. We know that the principal text-books in the common schools of New England in the eighteenth century were the New England primer, the

spelling book, the Psalter, the New Testament and the Bible. And so thorough was the instruction in religious subjects that Sunday schools did not spring up so early there as in the Middle and Southern States. The Bible had its place in the day schools of all the states. It was read and explained, and moral and religious lessons drawn from it. Prayer was also offered. It was no uncommon thing for public school buildings to be dedicated something after the manner of the dedication of churches, and to be used freely for religious purposes.

The Protestant Church is the mother of the public school system, but now she is allowed little or no place in determining its curriculum. The Protestant Church uncovered and unchained the Bible, and the popular knowledge of this book gained for us all our liberty; and yet the Bible holds a very limited place in our public schools at the present time. In the earlier days, when Protestantism predominated, both in numbers and influence, the public schools gave religious instruction. But now Catholics, Jews and agnostics have gained in strength. They, too, are American citizens, and have their rights. They demand that the Protestant Bible shall not be read in schools supported by the state, and comments thereon

made which are at variance with the traditions and convictions of those of other faiths.

As a result we see a gradual elimination of religious instruction from public education. For about one hundred and fifty years the religious element in general education has been growing less and less. It is a matter of common knowledge that religious instruction in the public schools has practically ceased. The Bible has been going out of these schools with an alarming rapidity. In some states there has been a complete overturning of the old order. "The United States, ever since the final ruling of the Wisconsin Court, has excluded definite religious teaching from the common schools; in some states, however, permitting the reading of the Bible without comment." In some states the law requires the Bible to be read. But it dare not be read in the public schools of California, Washington, Montana, Minnesota, Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, Wisconsin and Illinois. Say about the educational system of the past what we will, it at least had the religious element injected into it. One cannot go through the curriculum of the average public school now without being made conscious of the absence of all provision for religious instruction.

There are several aspects of this situation which are nothing short of alarming.

First. It is a universally recognized fact that no education is complete that lacks religious instruction. Man is a religious being, and so soundly and essentially religious that this part of his nature cannot be thought of as being fostered and developed independently of intellectual processes. The normal way is for the physical, intellectual and religious to grow together.

Second. The public schools exercise their influence upon the pupils at the critical period of life. Impressions made upon the child last. Ethical teachings then given would serve to curb the acts of disobedience and immorality in later life. Ample mental furnishing does not insure against vice.

Third. If many of the growing boys and girls do not receive religious instruction in the public schools, they will receive it nowhere. In "Creed and Curriculum," by William Charles O'Donnell, Jr., page 3, we read: "There are 19,000,000 children in the public schools of this country receiving no direct religious education. For five hours a day they are in touch with their teachers and under the teacher's influence. Once a week less than one per cent of these children go to Sunday schools, which attempt to make up for the lack of moral education in the public schools." The statement about the

one per cent will surprise us all, and it confirms what I want to say, namely, that millions of our young people belong to no church, to no Sunday school, to no religious organization, and, what is still worse, they receive no religious instruction in their homes. These non-religious millions are going to have no small part in the control of our country and in the shaping of its ideals. No religion in the public schools means no religion anywhere for a considerable percentage of our future citizens.

But the situation, as we find it, is not without its bright spots too.

First. There is a feeling of concern abroad in the land. Something more must be done for the religious training of the youth than is being done. The casting about for improved methods is prophetical of better results. There is a degree of godlessness prevalent to-day that is causing persons of all stations to think.

Second. Leading educators are devising ways by which religious instruction may be given. Already provision has been made in some twenty states and provinces so that credit is given in public schools for Bible study. The Colorado and the North Dakota plans have been pioneers in this direction. According to the Gary plan the pupils are

excused certain hours during the week, at which time they repair to their respective churches for instruction in religion. Dr. G. U. Wenner proposes that all pupils be excused from the public schools one-half day each week, say Wednesday afternoon, for religious training by the churches.

Third. The vast majority of our public school teachers are members of some Christian church. A superintendent of the schools of one of our largest cities said recently that ninety per cent of the teachers of the state with which he is best acquainted are Christians. We dare not lose sight of the personal influence of our splendid army of teachers.

Fourth. Efforts are being made to get the Jews, Catholics and Protestants to agree on a series of Bible readings for use in the public schools. Of course, those readings must be confined to the existence, attributes and providence of God, and the moral and ethical portions of the Scriptures. Nothing of a denominational character, or even distinctively Christian, would be permitted.

But even after taking into account every hopeful indication, this naked fact remains: religious education is a constantly diminishing factor in the public schools of the United States.

Personally, I do not see how religion, except in a very rudimentary way, can have a place in our public schools. Our national constitution forbids it. They are free and open to all children regardless of creed. We believe in the separation of Church and State. We have no possession dearer than freedom of conscience. No group among us has a right to force its belief on another group. There are some two hundred denominations or shades of belief in our country. It is difficult for a person to be sectarian without teaching sectarianism.

The weakness of the Protestant denominations in America has been their failure to make adequate provision for the religious training of all their children. They have depended too much upon the public school, a non-religious institution. And now that its doors are slowly closing against the Bible, the churches find that they are not in a position to give a systematic and comprehensive course in religious instruction to their young people.

What is the result? The burden of enlarged responsibility falls upon the Sunday school. It is the one institution in America that seeks to do for the religious nature of the child what the public school does for his intellectual nature. The catechetical class

is a large factor in religious nurture, but the Sunday school more so, because it touches so many more persons and has them for a much longer period of years. Where shall our youth be trained in religion? We answer, In the Sunday school. The Church has no other answer, for it is the only school of the soul-life the Church has. She will be in a position to answer differently when she inaugurates a program of week-day religious instruction, or when one of the preaching services shall be turned into a teaching service, neither of which would be totally new. But up to the present time the Sunday school is the educational department of the Church, and must build its program, instruct its teachers, and arrange its curriculum, so that it may take over part of the responsibility that was formerly assumed by the public schools in the way of religious instruction. It is an imperative necessity that the Christian Church shall enlarge her educational activities.

5. The Neglect of Family Religion

It does not seem probable that the Sunday school would have come into existence had the family, which was the first and largest provision for religious nurture, done its duty. One cannot help referring to the well-

known fact that nearly all of the great leaders in the early Christian Church had devout and godly parents. The youths whom Raikes met on the streets of Gloucester were without home training. It would be proper to say that the immediate occasion for the organization of a Sunday school was the decay and neglect of family religion.

What are the conditions to-day? Family religion is not a dead thing, and surely it is not as much alive as it ought to be. The unanimous belief is that it is not as prevalent as it once was. This is in part due to a breaking up of family unity through the readjustment of our industrial life, and to the creation of an endless number of outside organizations. But pass by causes and grasp the fact. It would be spiritually exhilarating to feel that parents were doing their utmost to send their children out in the world equipped as well religiously as they are intellectually and physically.

Provost Smith, of the University of Pennsylvania, said awhile ago, in speaking of family religion: "Whose fault is it if a freshman of eighteen enters my private office with his hat on the back of his head, and asks for 'Smith,' so that he may tell this man 'Smith' that he wants to 'cut this chapel business,' because he does not believe in re-

ligion? Will a chair of moral philosophy in any university help this condition?"

It is the fashion now-a-days to indulge in wholesale criticism of our colleges and universities. The charge is that they discredit the Bible, and tear to shreds our Christian faith, sending their graduates out into the world unbelievers, or at least indifferent to the Church. Part of this criticism is deserved, and the time is not far distant, we believe, when more of the higher institutions of learning will employ no professor who is not a Christian. But there is another side to this matter. When the training in our homes and Sunday schools is more positively religious and thorough, we may rest assured that more of the young men and women who pass through our higher institutions will be rooted and grounded in the truth when they have completed their course. The foundations of religious belief, as well as of secular education, should be firmly laid before a youth leaves home. Colleges have entrance requirements. What if they had religious requirements; how many of those who desire to matriculate would be received?

Theodore Cuyler, a giant among preachers and practical Christian men, said, a few years before his death: "When I was young parents used to tell their children Bible

stories and then send them off to Sunday school; now children learn the Bible stories at Sunday school and come home and tell them to their parents." There is more family religion to-day than yesterday. Better conditions are beginning to prevail. Christian parents are being aroused to a sense of their responsibility. Like Elijah of old on Mt. Carmel, they are gathering together the scattered stones of the tumbled down altar and are rebuilding it, and with deep concern are beseeching God to kindle fire thereon.

But even so, it is only a small percentage of families of which this can be said. God intended every father to be a priest in his family; but, alas! many of them have surrendered the office. Some superficial persons have blamed the Sunday school for this condition. If such has been the case in any instance, it was where family religion was already at the breaking point, and where parents stood at the door waiting for an excuse to escape their personal responsibility.

In any event, home training is woefully deficient. Such indoctrination of the children by the parents as Luther urged upon his generation is the exception and not the rule. I am no alarmist. I do not say the home has failed. But I do say it is only

a fraction of what God in His goodness intended it should be; and that because of this, there are thousands of children who receive absolutely no religious instruction except what they get in the Sunday school. To these immortals, as needy as any upon whom the love of Raikes ever fastened itself, the Sunday school is an important institution.

It makes no difference what plans may be devised, or what organizations may be effected, not any or all of them can take the place of family training and example. An agency like the Sunday school, that meets but once a week, and then for only one hour, and a voluntary association of individuals at that, cannot hope to make a permanent religious impression upon many pupils unless it has the support and co-operation of the home. In religious training the home is the principal, the Sunday school is the assistant. Where the two work heart to heart large results will be obtained.

While the school cannot do the work God has laid on the parents, yet in the event that family religion collapses, the school, by conscientious and faithful shepherding, is to try to care for the religious nurture of the little ones whose lives are thereby imperiled. When all influences are gathered up and weighed, it is probable the home will be more

largely indebted to the Sunday school than it is now willing to acknowledge. The widespread neglect of religion in the home makes the school a necessity and imposes upon it a serious responsibility.

6. The Non-Attendance of Children at Public Worship

We have seen that the Sunday school is the educational department of the Church. We are not, therefore, to think of those who attend the school, but are not present at the services of worship, as lost to the Church, or out of contact and union with it. If that were the case the situation would be appalling. We are not *satisfied* that they are identified with the Sunday school, but we are *glad* that they are. It might be far worse than it is. The hold the school has on its pupils is generally a strong one. However, the disquieting fact remains that they should attend church, but do not.

"We too slightly estimate the value of the public church service to the little child. The great building, the solemn silence, the music, the whole family in the pew, the pastor—'our pastor'—in the pulpit, the voice of sacred song, our pastor's prayer, the Scripture lesson read by the pastor from that great book on the pulpit—God's own word

—and then 'our pastor's sermon.' It is our pastor, whose hand is often in touch with the hands of the children who now listen to him and whom they reverence, and, it is to be hoped, love."—*Rev. John H. Vincent, D.D.*

The services of the church and school are, in a measure, the complements of each other. The order of the church service is (1) worship, (2) education; while that of the school is (1) education, (2) worship. From this it will be seen that attendance upon either for the average person is not all that is to be desired. The move to introduce a larger element of worship into the school has been discouraged by some. They say that if the school service is a duplicate of the church service there will be even less desire on the part of the pupils to attend public worship. One writer and authority says, "The element of worship should be reduced to the lowest consistent place."

We question, however, whether a little more or less worship in the school will make any appreciable difference in the number of those who frequent the preaching service. On the contrary, since the majority of the younger people attend only the school, would not the introduction of a larger element of worship supply in part what they miss through absence from the church, and serve

to cultivate those feelings under whose impulse they would be the more quickly led to attend divine worship?

If the rank and file of our pastors were asked if they are greatly encouraged by the number of pupils who are regular worshipers at the morning or evening preaching service, the vast majority of them would answer in the negative. There is another question that should be asked. It is this, "Would the audience at church be larger if there were no Sunday school?" The answer to this is problematical, but several reflections may be made. *First,* it was not larger, if as large, before the Sunday school movement began. *Second,* the congregations that have no school are not any better attended. *Third,* no pastor seems to have the courage to dispense with his school in the hope of increasing his audiences.

Can we not say, without a moment's hesitation, that the school is a feeder of the church? that the audiences, interest, intelligence, loyalty and offerings are much better than what they would be without the school? I believe in the divine origin and mission of the Christian Church, and, therefore, in her impregnability; but I am sure of one thing, that many congregations would close their doors and the whole Church sustain an ir-

reparable loss were it not for the splendid work our schools are doing.

If these contentions are correct, it is the duty of the local congregation to throw itself into the work of its Sunday school. Since the young people do not attend the preaching of the gospel, save in limited numbers, the scope of the school's ministry is a large one. We must reach its members where they can be found. Many of them get no Christian nurture save in the school, and if they are won and held for Christ and His Church it must be there. The very thought of it challenges our interest and demands our best efforts. The Sunday school grows in importance when we see that only through it does the church have any vital hold upon many of the children, and that in many cases for years it is the only church they know.

7. The Wide Influence of the Sunday School

Every institution that has come to amount to anything in the world has found that there are three steps in the evolutionary process. The first one is opposition, the second is indifference, and the third is popular favor. The Sunday school has been no exception. It was bitterly opposed in England and in our own country. But it deserved to live,

and it survived the opposition. Then it suffered almost as much through a long period of indifference. It was not openly opposed, neither was it accorded support by many good people. And when one pauses to think, indifference is a blight almost as deadly as antagonism. But the Sunday school has largely outlived it too. Truly this institution has come into the period of popular favor. The forward strides it has taken during the past few years in the enlistment of thousands of adults, in the training of its teachers, and in the adoption of more modern methods, give it a new lease of life, and predict the approach of an era of larger service for the kingdom.

That the Sunday school has an enrollment in the United States alone of about 18,000,000 immediately arrests attention and conveys some impression of its influence. The statement has been made that there are almost as many pupils to be found in the Protestant Sunday schools of North America on a Sunday as there are individuals present at the morning and evening preaching services in the same churches on the same day; and that the Sunday school enrollment is larger than the confirmed membership of these churches. Make allowance for bad management, inferior teaching, obsolete methods

and inadequate equipment, yet the sum total of the influence for good is incalculable.

If the above figures be true, or approximately so, we cannot be blind to our responsibility. The thought of looking into the faces of from twelve to fifteen millions of boys and girls and men and women every Lord's Day, and of explaining unto them the way of life, makes us take hold of the reins of duty with cleansed purposes and heightened ambitions. Our task is a tremendous one, far beyond our dreams, and none but the Holy Spirit can make us equal to it. The country spends millions on millions of dollars in educating the hand and the brain of the youth for the life that now is, and not a cent of it do we begrudge. The Church has the same work to do on the religious side, but the department of the Church in which this must be accomplished is the Sunday school. In our methods and expenditure of money we cannot rival the state, but in our aims and devotion to high ideals and sense of personal responsibility we must take no second place.

8. The Child at the Formative Period

Add to all that has been said on the importance of the Sunday school this last thought, that we have the majority of the

pupils at the formative, plastic period of life, and our impression is perceptibly deepened. As a rule, children come to us when they are four or five years old, and remain with us at least until they are fifteen or sixteen. Certainly a dozen years is long enough, even with only an hour per week for instruction, to implant some religious truths very deeply. No years following this period are so golden with promise.

When Jesus gave the children the foremost place and made them examples, it was partly because they are eager recipients of the gospel story. "If the world is to be saved, the children must be saved." The religious nurture of the child is the first duty of the Church, and it is the most comprehensive one.

It is a fundamental law of instruction that the best time to teach a person any given subject effectively is when the person is hungry for that subject. Sound instruction imparted at the wrong time makes no impression. Childhood is the period of spiritual hunger, and pre-eminently the season for an intelligent choice that may cover a lifetime. Then the heart is open to impressions and influences of an abiding nature. Then the life is bent toward good or evil. And it is just at that period that the Sunday school

is asked to contribute something toward bringing these children into conscious relationship with Jesus Christ. Before us every Sunday is a sea of fresh life waiting to be taken and shaped by the truth into that which pleases Him who said, "Except ye become as little children."

I do not propose the Sunday school as a cure-all. It has its limitations and unseemly weaknesses; it cannot be spoken of in the same breath with the public school as to efficiency; nevertheless if a stranger to the influence of this agency were to ask me what I consider the greatest educational force on the subject of religion in Protestant North America to-day, I would be compelled to say, the Sunday school.

IV

THE AIM OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

1. The Value of Aims

The aim in any pursuit does not belong to the adiaphora. It ranks high among the essentials. Without it all our work collapses and goes for naught. It gives direction and effectiveness to what we are doing. The goal of every endeavor is the one thing that pins us to our task and keeps the historian from writing failure over what we have undertaken.

Did we see a young man bending over his books, as eager to get hold of the truth therein contained as the hungry child is to get hold of the food on the table, we would feel like asking him what he was studying, what use he expected to make of it, what good he thought it would serve, and how it related itself to his life work. And he would not be slow in telling us. He knows why he is doing what he is and what he expects to get from it. The goal of his labors may be twenty-five, yea, fifty years off, but his eye has caught a glimpse of it, and that glimpse constitutes the lure, the pull of his life.

Were you and I to visit, on any Lord's Day, a Sunday school, we would know instantly upon stepping inside the door that there was purpose, design, objective there. It may not be as clearly defined in the minds of some as we would expect, but it is inconceivable that there should be from one hundred to five hundred persons assembled in one place, grouped according to age and ability, studying one book, joining in song, reverent in prayer, listening to a dozen or more teachers imparting the same message; I say it is inconceivable that an organization of this character should have no aim before it. We take it for granted an aim, a conscious aim, does exist, and that our schools, like our trains, know their direction, their schedule, and their destination.

2. The Growth of Aims

Aims grow up within us just as truth itself does. They do not remain fixed and permanent. It is perfectly permissible, yea, even desirable that there be a change of emphasis in the work of our schools. Sometimes it should be placed on the individual pupil, then on the school as a whole, then on the local church, or the community, or a particular movement, or one's denomination, or the world-wide need. Emphasis at different

times may be placed on the use of Bibles, or a larger enrollment, or more pupils at church service, or promptness, or better order, or increased offerings. The aim of the teacher may be very personal in many cases. He may seek to win the confidence of his pupils, hold their attention, have them participate, or master the lesson himself and be more thoroughly furnished for the work to which he has been assigned. But it will be seen that these are the immediate and proximate aims and not the ultimate goal of our labors. Were we to stop at any of these we would fail. They but contribute to the comprehensive and all-embracing aim which will be considered later.

Neither should we expect all the pupils present to be actuated by the same motives. Age must be taken into account. Children are, perhaps, present because their parents tell them to go, or because the neighbors' children attend the same school, or because they like their teacher, or because they look for some small reward. Young people may attend partly because they know they will find their "group" or "gang" there, or because of the social features, or because of the existence of clubs or athletic features encouraged and promoted by that particular school. If you were to quiz the members of

an adult class as to why they are there, you might find almost as many reasons as there are individuals. With some it is a habit and nothing more.

Now, many of these motives are second, third and fourth rate, but they are not to be laughed at or ridiculed. The inferior will be dislodged by implanting the superior. These are steps from the lower to the higher in the order of growth. We doubtless all came through those same stages, and if we hadn't we would be infants still. It is our business to meet the scholars on their level and at their own stage of development and lead them to higher ambitions and worthier aims. Their motives, without question, are part of those childish things which they will, in due course of time, under faithful leadership, put aside in exchange for those that belong to persons of maturer growth.

But rising above all these mixed and varied motives and aims should be found a few that give substantial character to the work of the school and save it from being labeled simply "another institution." As a general thing, a few persons do the thinking for the whole school. If it is to be kept from turning to the right hand or the left, or from frittering away its time, they must see to it.

They must guide its affairs, give shape to its ideals, and lead it out into the larger places of knowledge and service. Anyone can see how important it is that they think clearly, pray much, keep abreast of the times, and be able to give a good reason for the school being what it is. Happy is that school that has among its leaders men and women who are purposeful, clear-visioned, aggressive and consecrated, for they must save it from going to pieces on the rocks.

3. What the Sunday School Is Not to Do

1. It Is Not to Do What Is Already Being Done

Certainly the aim of the school is not to do what some other organization is doing. If a service of any character is being looked after through one agency of the church, it is a waste of time and energy to put another at the same task. A deserved criticism of our church organizations to-day is the serious loss of power resulting from a duplication of effort. It is needful that the work of the various societies be so systematized and coordinated that we shall have the maximum amount of efficiency with the minimum amount of machinery.

The case of a destitute family was re-

ported to a church. Two societies undertook to furnish relief, each ignorant of what the other was going to do. On a certain evening, soon after, two committees met before the door of the poor family. Each was carrying a bundle of clothing and a basket of food. Both were from the same church, but from different organizations, and each was surprised at meeting the other there.

A good way to prevent overlapping of work in some directions and a neglect of it in others is to create a cabinet, to be composed of the pastor and a representative from each organization within the church. The province of this cabinet would be to find out what the congregation is doing through its various agencies, to learn of new work to be undertaken, and to distribute it among the different societies.

It stands to reason that an organization as large, as representative and as energetic as the average Sunday school, could do many things; but it is not to usurp the function of other church agencies or duplicate their effort. Whatever other lines of work it may assume, it is not to forget that it is first and always the teaching service of the congregation.

That some churches are suffering from over-organization is apparent to careful ob-

servers. A new society may be a sign of death as well as of life. There is likely to be retrenchment in the years just ahead of us. The Sunday school will be one of the organizations retained. It may undertake, at that time, a larger service; but for the present it had better confine itself chiefly to the limits within which it has been operating.

2. It Is Not to Become a Social Center

Certainly the aim of the Sunday school is not to provide social enjoyment for its members. How easy it is for the school to be transformed into a social circle, or a number of social circles, corresponding to the classes, is evident to everyone who has had even a limited experience. With what ease this is done may be seen in the custom so widely prevalent of calling anything special an entertainment, as Christmas entertainment or Easter entertainment, rather than a service or celebration. The desire for pleasure is universal in normal youth. That desire God has implanted deep in the breast. It is a thing to be directed and not destroyed. It has its place, but is like uncontrolled fire when out of its place. It is secondary and must be kept under, lest the school lose its chief characteristic and come to be known

as a play-house rather than a school. Social enjoyment cannot stand among the worth-while aims of the Sunday school. This is not the work of a class in religious education. It may be utilized as a means toward the attainment of these aims, and there find a legitimate place, but it is wholly secondary.

3. It Is Not to Outnumber Some Other School

The aim of the school is not to enroll more pupils than are enrolled in a near-by school. The desire to add new members to our roll is highly praiseworthy, but I want to take this opportunity of sounding a note of warning against overdoing it. I attend a great many rally-day services, and almost everywhere the test of success is, Do we have more present than a year ago? This is one way of judging, but not the only one, and not the chief one. The good result of rivalry looks larger than it really is. The success of our public schools is not determined by the number of pupils attending them. Efficiency there is the principal criterion; work that will turn out for public life intelligent, upright and useful citizens. It will be a great gain for us when we pay more attention to the character of work done in our Bible schools. A policy of well-balanced effort is much

needed. Where increased enrollment is obtained through membership contests, the utmost care should be exercised lest the real purpose of the school be obscured and the last state of that school be worse than the first. It needs to be burned into the hearts of our officers and teachers that the regular Sunday-by-Sunday work of the school counts for infinitely more in the long run than any number of spurts. It remains to be proved that the largest schools are doing the most effective work. He isn't the richest farmer who owns the most land; he may have so much as to be land-poor.

4. It Is Not to Relieve Parents

And certainly the aim of the Sunday school is not to relieve parents of responsibility toward their children. It cannot do their work if it would. The family is a divine institution, and it may be said that no other institution mentioned between the covers of the Bible has its duties so clearly defined. The family is the foundation stone of every form of society, and whatever interferes with its fulfilling its function in the world is a menace. It is a question whether we are not asking fathers and mothers to give too much of their time to the church and her agencies. It is not an unusual thing for many of them

to spend six, eight and even ten hours a week in the church. Especially is this true in the smaller congregations. The Sunday school is not to blame for this condition any more than any of our other societies. But it is a matter that will have to be reckoned with in the near future. In the meanwhile, home-builders need to be told that they cannot shift their responsibility. The sending of their children to Sunday school is not the equivalent of or the substitute for conscientious home training and example. God, with a wisdom that is not wholly concealed from our eyes, has vested with the parents of this and every other nation the rise and fall of the coming generations. It isn't enough that they be busy, but that they busy themselves when and where and in the manner the Lord has ordained. The disintegration of the home life and the disposition of parents, even of so-called Christian parents, to lift the yoke of responsibility from their necks and thrust it from them is the most serious peril our country faces at this time. The liquor traffic, the gambling evil, and war itself are as nothing compared with it. The Sunday school is not doing business on Easy Street where the consciences of the indolent may be soothed. This needs to be made clear. The Sunday school is intended to aid

the home, to supplement and make its work easier and more abiding.

4. What the Sunday School Is to Do

1. It Is to Assist the Church in Her Work

But speaking positively now, we might, in a comprehensive way, say the aim of the Sunday school should be to assist the Church in carrying out her "great commission." This is a logical inference from our consideration of "The Place of the Sunday School." We saw that it sprang from the heart of the Church; that it is the child of the Church; that it draws its sanction and life from the Church. It is an integral part of the Church. Its officers and teachers, and the vast majority of its members, are identified with the Church. Its independent existence is not only inadmissible, but impossible also. It would completely lose its identity, deny its origin and purpose, and collapse were it to seek to exist by itself and for itself. It has ecclesiastical authority behind it, and should honor, serve, obey, love and esteem the parent institution.

It is not our thought to imply that the Sunday school is to attempt to do all the work assigned to the Christian Church, of which it is a part. One branch of a tree is not supposed to bear fruit for the whole

tree. The arm is not the whole body, and cannot do all the work the body is to perform. The personality accomplishes its purposes through many members. The Church in the full tide of her life has created numerous agencies, through all of which she is endeavoring to carry out the Lord's command.

And since the Sunday school lives and moves and has its being within the Church, its achievements must be for the good of that institution. Its aim is to serve her, its fruitage is to be for her honor; and before her the Sunday school must be brought for a reckoning. If the congregation, through her officers or a special committee, were to evaluate her school more frequently, test its methods and judge its fruits, the unity of the two organizations would be less likely to be lost sight of. Whatever we may say the aim of the Sunday school is, that aim will and must always fall within the mission of the Christian Church in the world. Both the congregation and its school are weighed in the same scales.

May it be that we make a mistake in saying, The congregation did this and the school did that? or, The congregation gave so much for benevolence and the school gave so much? Are we not putting asunder what God has joined together? Would it not be

better to say that the congregation did this or that *through* the school? For what is the school but the congregation specializing in the field of religious education?

And while not specifically defining its aim, it is eminently proper to say that the school is true to its mission when it is true to the highest interests of the congregation of which it is an integral part.

2. It Is to Instruct in the Word of God

But to analyze the subject a little more carefully, let me give what may be agreed upon as an all-inclusive and satisfactory statement of the aim of the Sunday school. It is this: Instruction in the word of God for the twofold purpose of personal salvation and unselfish service.

This statement of aim requires the consideration of three things: 1. Instruction in the Scriptures. 2. Personal salvation. 3. Unselfish service. The three may or may not be simultaneous. They may or may not be continuous. But the logical order is to be found in the way they are here stated.

Instruction in the Scriptures is the first thing to be done. The immediate object of the school is to cause the pupil to know the truth. This preserves the central idea of the school, which is that of religious education.

We cannot lead either to salvation or service without first causing another to know something about the divine revelation. God's word is life, and no other word is. It has the unique distinction of being able to make wise unto salvation. The entrance of that word—not into the head only, but into the heart as well—giveth light. Of course there must be an intellectual before there can be a spiritual apprehension of the truth.

The Bible is not an end in itself. It is the instrument God has given through which lost man might come to know Jesus Christ, in whom there is life. That this is the common understanding of it is evident from our theological terminology. If you were asked what the means of grace are, you would reply, "The means of grace are the word and sacraments." And your answer would be declared correct. The Bible, then, is a *means* of grace. It is not the end, the blessed consummation, the summit and glory of all. Holy men were not inspired to write the various parts of the Bible, and other holy men divinely led to bring them together simply that we might have a book. They were penned and collected for the express purpose of becoming a lamp upon our pathway, the instrument of our salvation. We most honor the Bible and best preserve it

when we faithfully teach it.

It is because the Bible is to be thought of in this light that most students of religious pedagogy nowadays make the child central in the school. They say the Bible is a means to an end, while the development of Christian character is the end of our work. We can see the reasonableness of their contention, and shall have no controversy with them, so long as they do not by the same sign discredit the Bible. There isn't any advantage in getting the pupil above the Bible if, first of all, we must put the Scriptures on a level with human productions.

The Bible is a means to an end. We will all grant that. It is the only way known among men whereby the sinner can be brought to a state of personal salvation and a life of unselfish service. We are shut up to this one way; if we fail to make plain the terms of redemption as laid down in this book we do it at the peril of our souls. It is the way ordained above, and the truth will be effectual in the hearts of men if it is not resisted. It is our duty to cause the scholars to know the word of God. And that is not teaching which does not cause another to know. No matter how learned we may be, how fluent of speech, how enthusiastic, if we have not added something

to the store of religious knowledge of the class each time we appeared before it, we have not taught.

Someone says the work of the Sunday school is threefold: first, teach the Scriptures; second, teach the Scriptures; third, teach the Scriptures.

The knowledge of the Bible we are speaking about is not the ability to answer certain catch questions. That is as unsatisfactory as it is superficial. There is a popular notion abroad that to be familiar with some obscure and unimportant references in the Bible marks one as a profound student of religion. A long list of questions can be compiled, no one of which touches upon fundamentals. As an illustration of what I mean, I give part of an editorial from a Cincinnati daily, clipped a year or more ago. That editorial says:

"Chicago church-goers have discovered that their knowledge of the Bible is limited. Ministers have sought to explain the ignorance of the Scriptures displayed by a Chicago congregation, but the fact remains that church-goers and former attendants of Sunday schools were unable to answer questions that should have been simple for one familiar with the greatest of all classics.

"The members of a prominent Chicago

church foundered on these questions: What man threw stones at a king? What was the origin of the word 'shibboleth'? When did the bleating of sheep foretell the loss of a kingdom? What fierce nations were driven out of their cities by hornets? What giant king had an iron bedstead thirteen feet long and six feet wide? What young man lost his temper in an argument with four older friends? Who escaped by the skin of his teeth?"

How simple these questions are you will learn when you try to answer them. They have to do only with the drapery of revelation. They may or may not be remembered in the pursuit of the soul after God. It does not follow that because we cannot answer these and like questions we are, therefore, ignorant of the Scriptures, or that because we can answer them we are real students of the word.

It is our duty to give the pupils a knowledge of the body of divine truth, an acquaintance with those events which constitute the heart of the Bible and go to the heart of the listener. To teach the Bible is to make the will of Jehovah known, and not merely to put the pupils in possession of a few isolated and unrelated facts, and minor ones at that.

None will gainsay the statement that there is woeful ignorance of the Bible to-day. And that ignorance obtains among our Sunday school hosts as well as elsewhere. It is hard to believe that in our midst is an organization, bearing the dignified title of *school,* that touches weekly and directly one-fifth of our population, and yet leaves in its train such gross and inexcusable ignorance of the world's greatest book. One declares that the Sunday school is crucified between two thieves—sacerdotalism on the one hand and secularism on the other. But the majority of schools are not troubled by sacerdotalism; secularism cannot be so easily excused. If one were looking for a substitute for sacerdotalism he might find it in incompetency, which opens the door for secularism. Notwithstanding my warm advocacy of the Sunday school, I cannot help feeling that there lies at its door part of the responsibility for the Bible being a sealed book. It matters little what else it may do, if it does not acquaint its millions with the contents of the Scriptures it has failed. No by-product of its labors will save it from reproach and ultimate extinction. It will stand or fall upon its ability to put the Bible into the head and heart of the people.

It is certainly not unreasonable to expect

that when a pupil reaches the age of fourteen or fifteen, having spent at least ten of them in a Sunday school, he should know some things. And he should know what he knows. What should a boy of this age know? Have we the right to expect that he be in possession of certain Bible facts? If so, of what?

He should know something of our first parents and their expulsion from Eden, of Noah and the flood, of the call of Abraham and God's promise to him, of the eventful life of Jacob, of how Israel got into Egypt, of the deliverance and building of the nation under Moses, of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, something of a few of the judges, of the three kings, of the division of the kingdom and the decline of both parts, of the captivity and return, something of the life and ministry of John the Baptist and of Jesus, of the call of the twelve apostles and their work. He should know the books of the Bible, the commandments, a few Psalms, the Beatitudes, and other choice portions of God's word. He ought to have a fair knowledge of the catechism, and of the principal doctrines of our Church, and of the rules of Christian living.

I am aware that we have but one hour a week, and that our material equipment is

awfully inadequate, and that there are numerous things to bury our work out of sight, nevertheless I believe that those who attend with any degree of regularity ought to be in possession of the outstanding facts of the Bible. Our only hope of reaching the souls of men and of bringing them into living relationship with Jesus Christ is through the word. That makes the immediate aim of the Sunday school very clear and specific.

3. To Lead to Personal Salvation

The second step in the aim of the Sunday school is the salvation of the individual. The total aim, we said, is "Instruction in the word of God for the twofold purpose of personal salvation and unselfish service." The word *salvation* is not used here in its limited sense of leading men to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. We mean to put into it all the processes by which a soul is brought into the fullness of the stature of Christ. It includes leading men to Christ and training them up in Christ. In one case it may mean regeneration, in another conversion, in all training, character-building, growth in grace through the means of grace. Salvation in the Biblical sense has this comprehensive meaning.

This salvation, however we may think of

the term, is effected by means of the Bible. The first step and the last step, and all between in the work of character-building, are accomplished through the application of the truth. The Scriptures are necessary to illumination, conviction of sin, justification, regeneration, conversion and sanctification. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. The grace for every good work begun, continued and ended in Christ is mediated to us through the word.

Salvation through the teaching of the law and the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, is the aim to be held steadily before the school. It should be talked about, definitely planned for and expected. No aim, however large, will keep itself to the front. That must be seen to of deliberate purpose. The lesson is to be prepared by the teacher with no smaller objective than the spiritual good of his pupils. Their home training, environment, temperament, associations, likes and dislikes, must be studied so that the word may be presented in such a way as best to reach the end sought. Those who make teaching a thing of ease cannot be indwelt by a compelling motive. To be required to answer for the safety of the souls of half a dozen boys will make us approach our task with solemnity.

Have you the impression that the average school could afford to allow this aim to occupy a more commanding place than it does? It is not sufficient that we have a good time, and enjoy the sprightly fellowship, and sing heartily, and have perfect attendance, and break all records. We must go deeper. We must lead those entrusted to us into the secret place of the Most High. We must make those who are already His long for a fuller consecration and a humbler walk. We must make those who are living in the far country say, "I will arise and go to my Father."

Sometimes we hear it said that results belong to God, that if there are to be any results He must give them. That is true. The increase is from Him. But that lopsided doctrine has worked perniciously in the practical affairs of the Sunday school. God uses instruments in the attainment of results. And the better the instruments, the more faithful, the more sacrificing, the larger the fruitage. There is serious danger that we shall fall into the thinking, as loose as it is perilous, that if we just go through the form of serving Him He will grant a return. That is heresy of the rankest sort. Sunday school leaders, whether in a large or small place, must be made to feel that they

are responsible for results in the last analysis, and just about as directly connected with them as the Lord Himself. And that will ever remain so as long as He chooses to use human agents for the accomplishment of His holy and glorious ends. Did you never read that he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully? And that does not apply to giving alone, but to service of every description. The general who does not win battles is removed, and yet God is the God of battles. The tenant who does not raise good crops is asked to pass on, and yet God alone can give the increase in nature. The minister who does not add members to the church and deepen the spirituality of his people may look for another pulpit, and yet there is no soul-movement upward in which God does not have a hand. As we sow we reap. God is responsible for results, but He has so arranged it that He has taken us into partnership with Himself in this responsibility. Our part is to plant and water, His is to multiply. Both are necessary. We *cannot* work without Him, and He *does* not work without us.

The Sunday school that does not lead souls to Christ and train up souls in Christ is a travesty on the name. Results are to be expected, looked for, seen and handled. They

must be as tangible as the harvest that springs up in the track of the husbandman. They may be had if we go after them, and in the economy of grace we may come home bringing our sheaves with us. Not entertainment, but salvation in its broadest sense must be the dominant note in our work.

There are the baptized children. They constitute a large proportion of the school's membership. They are God's children, incorporated through baptism into the Christian Church. Grace has been ministered to them through baptism, and they stand in covenant relationship with their heavenly Father. They are not strangers, aliens, and without hope. They are not to be dealt with as though they were unforgiven and life had not been bestowed upon them. They are Christians; true, they are untrained and undeveloped, but Christians nevertheless. They have been brought into the fold and made members of the Church through this initiatory sacrament.

What has the Sunday school to do for the salvation of this class? Manifestly not to convert them. That would be the saddest thing that ever could happen them. For conversion means a change of mind, a different standing, a reversal of position. That would put these little ones away from God

and out of the merciful covenant.

The attitude of the Sunday school toward these persons is twofold. *First,* to recognize their saved state, their acceptance in the Beloved. *Second,* to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They are to be taught the word of God. They are to be brought into consciousness of the gift and inheritance that became theirs through baptism. The child must be taught to walk, talk, labor and think. The same must be done for him in the spiritual life. The content of baptism is to be developed. The little ones are babes in Christ and need to be fed and strengthened and brought to stability of Christian character. The school is to make it as hard for them to do wrong and as easy to do right as possible. It is to restrain the evil and foster the good. As the intellectual faculties of the child unfold, he is to be led to see he belongs to Jesus, and is expected to remain true to the covenant made in baptism. The baptized children then are not to be looked upon as subjects for future regeneration.

Of course, we are not to forget that these babes in Christ must, when they come to years of discretion, make choice for themselves. They will have to decide for their fathers' God. They cannot always be Chris-

tians by proxy. The vows assumed for them in infancy are to become their own by deliberate decision. They must confess Christ with their own lips if the purposes of grace are not to be thwarted. However, this act is not the new birth. The work of the school for these is instruction, training, development of the life early implanted.

But the school has to deal with another class. Some who have been baptized received no home training, and, as a result, are living in sin. Grace was bestowed upon them in vain, and God's will for them was thwarted through human delinquencies. Then there are those who have never been baptized. Some of these are young people, others are adults. They have never been offered to Christ by another, nor have they offered themselves. It is the business of the school to lead them to Christ, to urge upon them the necessity of choosing Him as their personal Saviour. This feature of our work dare not be minimized. The new birth is as essential now as when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, or Paul to the Philippian jailer. The streets are full of young and old who are not Christians. The Lutheran Sunday school owes them something. We are not to be satisfied to hold the baptized child. We must go out and compel others to come in.

The Sunday school is to be a spiritual home, a saving refuge, and evangelizing agency. It is incumbent upon us to make disciples of all men. The other we should do, but we are not to leave this undone. Our full work must include both preservation and rescue.

There is a general feeling among our leaders that the Lutheran Sunday schools, as a rule, have not performed their part in bringing the lost adults in their communities to Christ. There are two reasons for this, neither of which excuses us. The first is the spiritual care we have given the children. But why should this ever lead us to pass by the man who is staggering on toward the grave without a saving knowledge of the way of life? Sometimes we have had it preached into us that our duty is to look after certain nationalities, our own by birth and training. That is part of our duty, and only a part. The second reason is found in our antagonism to a certain type of evangelism, and, as a result, we have swung off so far that it almost seems at times that we have lost the evangelistic note in our preaching and teaching. This may be denied, but we only ask that existing facts be studied.

The Sunday school, especially the upper departments, can be made an evangelistic force. It is the largest field for this work

the Lutheran Church has to-day. It affords an opportunity for systematic effort, and the appeal to the unsaved is an attractive one. We must stress the evangelistic note. If we grow indifferent to the gray-haired sinner, God will remove the candlestick from its place.

4. To Train in Unselfish Service

The last step in the aim of the Sunday school is service. Through instruction in the Scriptures comes salvation, and through both of these comes unselfish service. Our pupils are to serve the church, the home, the community, the state. Being helped, they are to help others. Being saved, they are to save others.

There is an important law with which we are all familiar. It runs thus: Where there is no expression there has been no impression. The Christian life cannot be a Dead Sea, all-receiving, nothing-giving. What has been well wrought in will work itself out. It simply cannot live by itself. Christianity not only changes a person's attitude toward God, it also changes his attitude toward his neighbor. If it does not make him a better husband and father, or a more dutiful son, it "hasn't taken." If it does not put within the pupils a feeling that they are their broth-

er's keeper, a desire to clothe the naked, feed the hungry and to do unto others as they would be done by, an understanding of their place and responsibility as Christians in the social and industrial order, a disposition to give of their substance and to consecrate themselves as the inner light directs toward the evangelization of the whole world, then, I say, they need to be born again.

A Sunday school, like any other religious organization, is to be judged by its fruits, and one of its most precious fruits is a glad and unselfish service among its membership. The school must relate its teaching to the practical affairs of life. More than attendance upon divine worship and a periodical gift for benevolent objects is required. Our religion is to cover the seven days and sanctify every relationship embraced therein, and to bring all the powers of one's mind and spirit under the dominion of the Lord Jesus.

Teaching is to lead to doing. "Faith without works is dead," is as true in Sunday school as in church. As a general thing, young people and older want to do something. We do not sing that hymn, "Oh, to be nothing, nothing," as much as we used to, and it is well. Our schools like to sing the heroic, martial music, and to study about those men and women who have flung them-

selves into some great cause, spending and being spent for it. They do not get to be very old before they begin to interpret life in terms of service. They select for their ideals those who have done something. No appeal is stronger than that which calls into activity their faculties and powers.

The pupils should be taught where and how to work. They may be bashful, awkward and untrained, but their eagerness to be of service, and their quick response to calls of one kind or another, offers one of the largest opportunities we have. Of what use are an informed mind, a warm heart, and an aroused conscience, if they be not related to the tasks needing to be done? It is incumbent upon us to train and develop workers in the school for the congregation, the community, and wider fields.

How imperative all this is will become apparent to anyone upon a moment's reflection. Our workers must come largely out of the Sunday school. The truths taught the child must find expression in daily life. He is to take his place in the Christian Church and serve her. It ought to be true that those who have had the advantages of a Sunday school training are among the most intelligent, loyal and active members of the congregation. The school is not to train away

from the church, but for her.

We cannot help being impressed with the fact that on the average about one-fifth of the membership of our schools have some definite task to perform in connection with the school's activity aside from lesson study. We do not minimize the lesson. It must hold the central place. But it is not all. When the Bible is faithfully taught it will cause those taught to rise up and say, "Here am I, Lord, send me." Impression without expression is an impossibility. That is one reason the Sunday school is so popular. It provides a large field for the exercise of individual gifts. Those who want to work can usually find something to do.

But it devolves upon us to train workers with large vision. They must think of more than local school and church. They have part in a world program. The school that would save its life must lose it. One has said that the difference between a statesman and a politician is this: a statesman says, "My country," while a politician says, "My ward." There are Christians who have a politician's outlook; they are provincial in their thought and effort. They are satisfied if *their* school grows, and *their* church prospers, and *their* community is made better. Then there are others whose thoughts are

continental and world-wide; they interpret the success of their own organizations in the light of the success of the whole kingdom of God. They know they have failed unless they have contributed something in prayer, gift and life to the wider work.

It is a sad commentary on the teaching and general influence of many of our schools that in their twenty-five, fifty, or more years of existence, they have never sent out from their membership a minister, a missionary, or a deaconess. Mr. Charles G. Trumbull declares that "the day is coming when the Sunday school that has not sent some of its members to a home or foreign mission field, while at the same time numbering still others in its membership as volunteers, pledged to go, will be ashamed and self-condemned." The assertion startles. Possibly our first impulse is to protest. Our second is to sit down and calmly think it over. Our third is to consent. Our fourth is to help realize it. Our fifth is to ask the Lord if He wants us or ours in some remote field.

When we talk of more young men for the ministry, or of enlisting recruits for any other kind of religious service, we must take the Sunday school into account. Its influence is unmeasurable. Its pupils, young and old, should be led to believe that Christian service

is expected of them, and that if the light that is in them is not to become darkness, they must do good to all men and become the servant of all. "For we have not reached, to any appreciable degree, the end of all high training until we have learned that we live best when we live least for ourselves and most for others. That man is richest in soul who has given most to enrich other souls; that man is a beggar in his spirit who has never done kindly ministrations to his fellowmen."—*Governor M. G. Brumbaugh, Ph.D.*

The public schools are expected to make intelligent, patriotic citizens. The Church, through her various agencies, is expected to make Christian citizens. Knowledge becomes power only when linked to faith in God.

The aim of the Sunday school is clear. It is to instruct its pupils in the word of God, to bring them into conscious relationship with Jesus Christ, to provide them with high ideals, and to lead them to the source of power for the realizaton of those ideals. It is to teach, guide, warn, save and train them, building them up into a Christlike character, and sending them out to become useful members of society and worthy citizens in the kingdom of God.

When John was near the end of his gos-

pel, he said, "These"—miracles, parables, wonderful discourses, revelations—"are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

In seeking the aim of the Sunday school, we sum it up by saying, these—room built and equipped, officers elected, teachers chosen, classes formed, lesson helps provided, instruction given, prayer offered, hymns sung—are supplied and operated that the pupils might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing they might have life through His name.

V

THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Of what use are aims unless we strive to attain them? They may be very high and worthy, but if we do not reach out after them and daily come nearer their realization, they are utterly worthless. It is not probable any of us ever come into full possession of all the good goals we set before us, but he never fails who tries, no matter how far off he finds himself when he must quit the race. "He who does his best is God's blue ribbon man."

Having located in the last chapter the chief aim of the Sunday school, we are ready to consider now the methods to be pursued and the agencies to be employed in reaching that aim. This is the logical order. We want to know how to make the school most effective in leading its pupils to personal salvation and unselfish service through the study of the Holy Scriptures. This is a paramount question. Multitudes of workers are having their ears to the ground to-day, eager to learn how their schools may the better

accomplish what they have been set to do. They are ready to abandon the honored traditions of the past as to method if they can be assured of something superior. That is one healthful sign about a goodly number of our schools. They are willing to learn. They are not irretrievably committed to precedent. They know they have not attained. They are not satisfied with present achievements. They would love to move out into the more spacious areas of usefulness. They await the larger light.

How, then, may the Sunday school, the Lutheran Sunday school, do the work that has solemnly been committed to it? We shall speak of three things: *First,* the building; *second,* the literature; *third,* the leadership.

1. The Building

The Sunday school building has more to do with efficiency than we are wont to believe. When God made this earth it carried two marks. The one was beauty, the other usefulness. And these marks are with it still. The room or rooms used for the school of the church should be beautiful and serviceable. It is needless to speak here of the influence of environment. It does not follow that because environment is good that

the individuals upon whose lives that environment beats will be good and pure. That is claiming too much for it. But if you and I were to be granted our choice there would be a unanimous vote in favor of wholesome, helpful, uplifting surroundings.

Not enough attention has been given to the location or arrangement of the place where the school must do its work. This is not so surprising. Only recently have we come to think properly of what a church should be. Better Sunday school facilities are coming. If not this generation, then surely the next one will meet in buildings more adapted to the purpose. None of us will deny the church the right to have the more elaborate, beautiful and expensive building. But to plant the church down on a lot and give to school purposes whatever space may be left, is neither good business nor good religion.

I was lately taken through a church in one of our large cities by the pastor. The structure had been built but a year or two before. I was first shown through the auditorium, which was churchly and impressive. Then we went into the Sunday school building. The rooms in which the upper grades met were ideal. Then he led me down stairs. The way was dark, and the pastor said I

would have to watch my steps. We were soon in the Primary and Beginners' departments. The air was damp, the concrete floors were actually wet; the walls were moldy in places. the plaster had begun to fall away, and it is not possible on the brightest day to carry on the work of these departments without the use of artificial light. It is impossible to change materially many of our school buildings, but when new ones are erected they ought to have the very best facilities.

Why is it that children have so often been assigned the most undesirable quarters? The child is central in the school, and should be determinative of the school's policy. But our practice does not comport with our doctrine. The child should have the best. If we take him for Christ it will be when he is young, and no small contribution will be made by his surroundings. Let the men's and the other older classes occupy the less desirable rooms.

A Sunday school building should be comfortable, conveniently arranged, well-lighted and ventilated, and easy of access, with the best of everything for the children. Let us learn once for all that darkness and gloom are not specially conducive to a religious atmosphere. It is of decided advantage to

have the departments of the school separated by sliding or folding doors. Where this cannot be done screens or improvised curtains can be used. The curtains can be suspended on wires or piping; the screens can be removed and the curtains can be drawn back, thus throwing the whole school into one when desired. It is scarcely possible to estimate the value of these for class work until they are tried. It is childish to argue against them on esthetic grounds.

Comfortable chairs are no more expensive than uncomfortable ones. Sand tables should be provided for the smaller children at least, and ordinary square tables of convenient size about which classes may gather with their teachers. Blackboards, maps and charts should not be wanting. Religious mottoes and pictures should be hung upon the walls. In this way walls can be made to talk. I frequent a Sunday school in which hang numerous mottoes, artistically framed. Here are two of them: "Not America for America's sake, but America for the world's sake"; and, "If our religion is not true, we ought to change it; if it is true, we are bound to propagate it." They are always preaching a sermon.

The commandments, creed, psalms and beatitudes are more quickly memorized

from large charts than from the small type found in lesson helps. The unveiling of pictures of great men impresses lessons never to be forgotten. It is a good thing to change pictures and mottoes from time to time. This arrests attention. Critics will say they oppose having the walls disfigured. But in a Sunday school room religious education has the right of way. Imagine Gregory's seven laws framed and hung up. They would teach teachers every week how to do their work better. Have you tried to use your wall space?

And if you ever saw children stand along the streets drinking in the suggestions of billboards, or feasting their eyes on the contents of a show window, or begging for the little pictures that come with the weekly lessons, you have some conception of the good that may be accomplished by placing pictures on the walls. They are not expensive. Excellent reproductions of the best can be had at little cost. The eye-gate of childhood is very busy, and impressions made in this way will abide long after what we said has been forgotten.

Most of the furnishings we have mentioned, save the modern building, are within the financial ability of a good porportion of our schools. But schools are bare of these

things, either because our fathers did not have them or we do not know of their worth. The day is now at hand when they may be counted indispensable. They aid in obtaining and giving a knowledge of the Bible. Nothing but the best we can afford is good enough for the Sunday school. It cannot do its work with antiquated tools, much less with no tools at all. Money put into the school is invested in character. A bright, cheery room, with modern equipment and up-to-date helps, immediately improves the order of the school, is conducive to the spirit of worship and Bible study, increases the avenues of knowledge, and tends to beget in the pupils a desire for communion with the heavenly Father. A dilapidated-looking room, which might be remedied by setting aside a few pennies a week, does not minister to good morals. Let the church have the best, but let the Sunday school have the next best. The signs of improvement in this direction are so encouraging that the next twenty-five years will witness a healthy transformation even in our humbler schools.

2. The Literature

The amount of Sunday school literature sent throughout our country is almost unbelievable. The editor of one denominational

house says that they alone send out a million and a quarter copies weekly. Multiply that many, many times, and we have some idea of the volume of literature that goes Sunday and weekdays into the hands of some twenty millions of Sunday school pupils, and thence into homes and hearts that would not otherwise be touched. The possibilities here offered are beyond our dreams, and impose a responsibility that makes the sober-minded tremble. The Church has been seriously concerned with the field thus presented, and well she may be, for as goes our literature so goes America. The wild contest for the ear and the eye of the public demonstrates the accuracy of the statement. If the literature our young people get hold of and read can be kept true to the principles and ideals upon which this republic was founded, we need have no fear for the future. By far the largest proportion of the literature that finds its way into any congregation goes through the Sunday school. Its influence is incalculable, and the total result eternity alone will disclose.

1. The Bible and Lesson Helps.

Let us start with this proposition which none will be even tempted to dispute: The Bible is central and fundamental, and should

determine the character of all the literature made available for our pupils. As all roads led to Rome, so all lesson helps, charts and mottoes, music books and reference and reading books in the library should lead toward the Bible. Nothing that calls into question the integrity and authority of *the Book* should for a moment be tolerated. There may be an abundance of room in the school, but none of it can be given over to sheets that assault the Scriptures even by insinuation.

It is more than unfortunate that here and there are schools which persist in ordering papers and helps because they are cheap. There isn't anything in all the world cheaper than the literature of infidels and agnostics. It can be had almost for the asking. But it exacts a terrible toll when estimated in terms of conduct, character and life. As much as we fear the consequences of the circulation of such reading matter, there is another thing even more to be dreaded, and that is the literature that carries high-sounding titles and pretends to be Christian, and yet, with a seductiveness that eludes the eye of the average reader, denies the faith of our fathers, the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and repudiates the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. It is being persistently distrib-

uted among our people, at our very church doors and through the mails, and it seems there is no way by which it can be stopped. Our only hope is in furnishing those committed to our charge the antidote, a literature that is absolutely loyal to the word of God, and in such quantities and at such popular prices as to save them from the threatening peril of skepticism and heresy. Can *we* get the product of our printing presses upon the family table first? Can we engage the thought of the growing boys and girls until they are so rooted and grounded in the faith that they will resist false doctrines?

The Bible ought to have a large place in class work when the pupils have reached the age at which they can handle books and read with some degree of intelligence. We can conceive how individuals can be inspired with reverence for the Bible without using it, regarding it as a fetish; but we cannot conceive how they can acquire a knowledge of the Bible and true love for it without becoming accustomed to the use of it. Lesson helps have given a tremendous impetus to the study of religious truth, but it is to be regretted that they have relegated the Bibles to some dark, dusty corner, if there have been any Bibles in the school to relegate to such a place. It is obligatory upon us to reassert

the Protestant principle, which not only allows the people at large the privilege of possessing the Scriptures, but that also compels them to have them. It is a short-sighted policy to give scholars a cheap edition of the Bible with small print, but if means are limited, quite respectable copies can be purchased in any quantity at small cost. There is no reason why a hymn-book, costing twenty-five or thirty cents, can be placed in the hand of each member of the school, and the Bible, which costs no more, cannot be.

Lesson helps should not all be banished from the school. It is to be sadly confessed that they seem in some instances to have made the Bible a neglected book, but that is the exception and not the rule. We ministers have spent some twenty years in school, preparing ourselves for our calling; and it is to be supposed that if any class of individuals could get at the meaning of the Scriptures without helps of any kind it is our class. And yet no secret is being divulged when I say that we stay pretty close to our commentaries, volumes of sermons and treatises on theology when we come to the preparation of sermons. And it is doubtful if any one of us ever prepares a Sunday school lesson without availing himself of the material furnished by his denomination at least.

To expect our teachers and pupils to come to a knowledge of the truth without outside aid is to expect what rarely has been done, and what the wisest and best of persons do not do themselves. Lesson helps have a place and a mission, but they are to lead to and exalt the Bible, not to supplant it. If a school that assumes to call itself a Bible school loses sight of the Bible it is pursuing a policy that is inconsistent and self-destructive. It is being proved every Lord's Day that helps do not necessarily obscure or supplant the Bible, but that they increase the knowledge of and love for God's holy word.

Personally I do not object to the introduction of extra-Biblical material for study in the school, *provided* it recognizes the word of God, is based on a portion of it, and is made subordinate. I can see how material of this character can serve a most useful end. My own conviction is that the divine revelation has been closed, that the way of life and all needful to be known to produce saving faith and good works is found in the Bible; but I am equally convinced that while revelation has closed, God has been using the progress of the Christian Church through all these centuries for the illumination and illustration of that supernatural revelation, and that He wants us to study saving truth

in the light of what has taken place since Calvary and Pentecost. This is all the outworking of the word of Holy Writ, and becomes in turn confirmatory of its divine character and the evidence of its claims upon the attention of men. We have all heard ministers preach on the Reformation, on Luther's life and work, on the Patriarch Muhlenberg, and other persons and epochs in Christian history, and we never thought the dignity of the pulpit was thereby lowered. Observing the principle above stated, the Bible first and central in every lesson, no serious objection can be lodged against the consideration of the lessons the gospel has written deep in the history of Christianity. Someone said, "I never knew the Bible until I knew Judson." The reason our people so often go wandering here and there, and are caught in the current of loose religious thinking, is because they are ignorant of the history, spirit and genius of our Church. It is not to be concluded, therefore, that we are untrue to the Bible when we study in Church and Sunday school the movements in which God's hand is so clearly manifest. The literature of the Sunday school is to make the Bible a more intelligible and commanding book.

2. The Music

"Let me write the songs of a people and I do not care who writes their laws," says one. The history of all great nations might be written around their songs. Some seem to think that it is not necessary to be particular about Sunday school music, because it is *only* for children. That is just what makes it of supreme importance. Spiritual impressions are received through songs as well as through pictures and stories. And since earlier impressions outlive later ones, it is imperative that the most attention be given to the music for the children. They will remember those songs when they come to maturity, because they become a part of their very souls.

It is a violation of a well-known law to put into a child's mind and spirit what is not intended to become a permanent part of his character. And it is a violation of every religious principle to vitiate a child's taste with doggerel and catchy, theatrical trash, and unfit him to appreciate the best music. We have been singing too much about the birds, flowers, meadows and brooks, and omitted the themes of the gospel. Many of our songs have been puerile and inane. They have lacked substance, and hence do not last more than a season in books.

In repeated testings children, and even small children, have shown their preference for the old, substantial hymns. That they do not care for them and cannot sing them is as erroneous as it is harmful, and is a false idea some adults are nursing. Children should be taught singable, uplifting, worshipful music. Christ should be the center, as He is the center of lesson study and prayer. They should be told the meaning of the songs they sing. Songs that deserve to last have just as much melody and movement about them as their empty substitutes. And what is more, they have noble sentiment, lofty aspirations and spiritual truth. They do more than entertain, they feed. And what does not feed dare not be admitted into the Sunday school.

Two remedies may be suggested for the elimination of the undesirable and the introduction of the desirable in the way of music for the Sunday school.

First. There should be a committee appointed, the members of which not only understand music and the doctrines of the Church, but also understand the child and appreciate the importance of giving him the best. Our mistake has been in yielding to the wishes of a person or two who were incompetent. Such committee should have the

courage to suggest the book for use which is in harmony with the standards and principles of the Church, and which will best develop the faith and life of the school.

Secondly. A good chorister or choir should be in charge of the music, so that it be made attractive and properly learned. Ample testimony can be gathered to prove the claim that, with only a small amount of trouble, music that will stand the test can be sung in all departments of the school. It is not unusual to hear of the expenditure of large sums of money to have good music in the congregation. And against this we have no word of criticism to offer. With a fraction of the same outlay of money, time and thought, the problem of Sunday school music would happily be solved. Music to be dignified and worshipful does not need to be impossible of rendition by the average school, but it should move upon the feelings, answer the deepest aspirations of the soul, convey truth, and bring the singer into a proper attitude and act of worship and conduct. Simple music may meet all these tests and be truly standard. Experience has taught us that a well-sustained effort on the part of a few for a better grade of music will not fail of success.

3. The Library

The library also properly comes under the head of Sunday school literature. A few years ago the library seemed to be near the end of its usefulness. And had it died it would not have lived in vain. Judged according to present day standards, the libraries we knew had their serious defects, but they served their generation, and were a part of those imperfect institutions which greater light and increasing knowledge are improving.

There is a brief chapter of sacred and secular history mixed that is uncommonly interesting, and should often be rehearsed. To get it vividly before us I quote three sentences from Rev. H. F. Cope, D.D. He says: "Little did men think, when they heard of the school for destitute children being formed in England by the printer, Raikes, that there was a movement which should do more for the popularization of reading amongst all classes and for the institution of public libraries than any other single agency. The free public library owes more to the much despised Sunday school library than we have been accustomed to reckon. The Sunday school library trained the great middle classes to reading books, and when the taste for reading grew beyond the vision of

the Sunday school and its library seemed a lamentable failure, the public library became an imperative necessity."

Once more, then, a public institution is seen to have sprung from the heart of the Church. If one were to ask who the originator of the public library was, he would receive from many the answer, Mr. Carnegie. Fostered by the gifts of the state and by the benefactions of generous-minded men, it has far overtowered the modest Sunday school library, but it must remember the rock whence it was hewn.

While cheerfully granting that the public libraries are beautiful and offer their untold privileges to men of all classes, we are not willing to admit that they are taking the place of the Sunday school library. Neither officer, teacher or scholar will find in the former all he ought to have access to. In the average public library will be found a goodly number of books on psychology and pedagogy, but only a limited collection of distinctly religious books, and many of these of a type that will not greatly benefit our people. Select a public library at random and go through it and see how many volumes are there that you, if you had your own choice, would give first place in a Sunday school library.

Because of this condition, apparent to everyone, the Sunday school library has taken on a new lease of life. It is here to stay. If the public school needs a library—and it does—for its teachers and scholars, so does the Sunday school.

The Sunday school library has at least three distinct advantages over the public library for the membership of the school and congregation.

First. It is more convenient. Many will be surprised to know that not one person in ten lives within easy reach of a public library; and not one in twenty-five visits it for religious literature. The weekly visit to school or church brings the people to the library itself; and if the books are in a conspicuous place they will find readers who would not have thought of this or that book had they not had the privilege of running their eyes along the shelves. We scarcely know what we want to read until we see the volume before us.

Second. It contains, or at least should contain, those books which the people who worship there most need to read. It is supposed to specialize along the lines of work the congregation is carrying on. Where would you go if you wanted to learn about your Church, its history, its doctrines, its

great men, its home and foreign mission work? It ought to be possible for you to go to your Sunday school library and get what you want. And it will be possible when the local church takes as much interest in the library for its own welfare as it should.

Third. It helps to make the church the center of activity and usefulness, and the institution that takes pride in meeting all the spiritual needs of all its constituency. That is the advantage of having a reading room in connection with the Sunday school building. It is probable that much of the general reading matter at the disposal of the pupils can be found at the public library, but if they may do their reading under the church roof, their affections, interest and loyalty will gravitate toward that place.

The wholesale and indiscriminate condemnation of the old library is not merited. It had points of strength. It had its defects. The former will be retained, the latter are being eliminated. The enlarged Sunday school vision will effect great changes in the Sunday school library.

Not all books in this library need necessarily be strictly religious. There should be a liberal amount of the best fiction suitable to pupils of all ages. Books of biography are very popular, and when selected with

care, will furnish fine heroic and ethical ideals. Think of the patriots, philanthropists, consecrated business men, ministers, missionaries, temperance reformers and other religious leaders, and one can see how wide the field from which to select. A few well-chosen books on travel, history and poetry might be included. Books for parents, for the afflicted, and for general religious culture should find a place.

The library of to-day differs from that of yesterday not only in the better grade of fiction it contains, but even more in the wider field of need it seeks to meet. The up-to-date library now, in addition to the above-mentioned lines of reading, contains at least the following: A commentary on the Bible, a life of Christ, of Paul and of Luther, a dictionary of the Bible, a concordance, a theology of the denomination, a history of the Christian Church, and of our own branch especially, several volumes on world missions and missionary heroes, a history of the Sunday school, and the best books of reference for all the officers and teachers. This somewhat extended list may seem prohibitive to the school of limited means, but it is not. It is surprising what can be done by honest effort. Some of us will live to see the day when a Sunday school without at

least a few books on the management of a Sunday school and the best methods of teaching will be as anomalous as a physician's office without books on medicine.

Do you know that our Sunday schools, taken as a whole, spend for literature a fraction less than the price of a postage stamp per week upon each pupil? If the returns have been unsatisfactory it may be because the Church has sown sparingly. Our schools have many needs, but one of the greatest is for a literature commensurate with the opportunity at hand. I am perfectly sincere in the affirmation that Lutheran literature for Lutheran churches and Sunday schools will net the largest results for our denomination, and through it for the kingdom of God.

3. The Leadership

1. The Pastor

He is the pastor of the church, and, therefore, of every organization within that church. He is the pastor of the Sunday school, and has just as much right to say "my Sunday school" as "my church." It is his Sunday school, and he is no intruder when he is there. He is not usurping authority when he lifts up his voice in behalf of its management or its teaching. He is pastor of the Sunday school and its chief officer. He

is the spiritual head, as the superintendent is the executive head. The two must see to it that they work together with perfect freedom and frankness. Misunderstanding and friction here will disrupt the school. It is to be supposed that each is a Christian gentleman, and they should have confidence in each other.

A pastor should never be absent from the sessions of the school of his church unless it is unavoidable. We have heard of a few pastors who did not attend the school. Some of these we know had a career as brief as it was checkered. The excuse that he is too busy has no weight with him or with any other right-thinking man. A pastor said, not a long while ago, "I have three congegations, one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. The most important one is that of the afternoon." It is not likely you agree with him from one point of view. But think the declaration through before you criticise him.

Occasionally we hear a minister say, "My business is to preach the gospel." But if he will turn to his Bible, he will see that the command to teach stands right alongside the command to preach, and that it fell from the same holy lips. If he is too busy preaching to assume responsibility for any other

work, let him close the church at one of the preaching hours and get into the Sunday school. His gains will far exceed his losses. Who ever heard of a shepherd so taxed with caring for the old sheep that he had no time for the lambs?

The pastor should be in the Sunday school as an example. How can he invite others to come unless he is faithful in attendance? They will look to him and do as he does. Certainly, under normal circumstances, he should neither superintend nor teach regularly. But it is likely, in many cases, he will have to do the latter. He should be free to visit all the departments of the school. The practice of spending most of the time in the senior and adult departments is not a good one. He should make it a point to know all the children by name. This will require patience and much effort, but it pays large dividends. Many have not done it for no other reason than that they imagined they couldn't. There are schools of six and seven hundred, and the pastors know each pupil by name. To recognize them in the home and on the street and call them by name wins their hearts. And I wonder if anything less than that is good shepherding. The eastern shepherd knows his sheep and calls them by name, and they know him.

The pastor must believe in the Sunday school. There is every reason why he should. Its providential markings must command his devotion. He must believe in its mission, its importance, its value as a training school, as a recruiting station, as a culturing agency, as the church's right arm of power, as a place where probably the doctrine of the priesthood of believers is best realized. He should believe in it because of the homes it opens to him, the extended field of service it gives, and the opportunity for judicious and valuable leadership. It is not improbable he will have to blaze the way toward higher efficiency. He ought to count it a privilege to acquaint himself with the best methods of Sunday school work, and take the pains to make himself a true leader. Pious phrases and religious platitudes will not answer here.

Did you ever hear a pastor say his teachers were incompetent to do their work? Upon second thought that is a reflection upon him. Why are they incompetent? Is it of deliberate choice, or have they not had an honest chance to improve themselves? One of the grandest and most far-reaching opportunities that ever come across a minister's path is to teach his teachers. He is responsible for the doctrines they hold and dispense to their class. Say what you will about it,

he is responsible for the way the Bible is taught in his school. "And if untaught or ill-taught, teachers propagate their ignorance; the inefficiency and ignorance of his church, and the struggles of his parishioners with doubt must be charged, in large measure, to the pastor himself, who, while pretending to stand for the truth of the Bible, has not trained his teachers to teach it." We, as pastors, had better give less thought to the administration of the school and more to doctrine and spirituality.

It stands to reason that we can do little in teaching and training the whole school personally and directly. But we can teach and train them mediately through the teachers. The minister should covet the opportunity of entering this field and make the most of it.

The pastor should not be swift to criticise the mistakes he sees, but lovingly recognize the good that is being done and give credit where credit is due. If he can win and retain the confidence of his officers and teachers, he will be in a position to give direction to the activities of the school without in the least seeming to be officious. The interests of the school are big enough to carry into the pulpit not only for announcement, but for an occasional sermon. The congregation needs to know the pastor's

sentiments about the school. Such breadth of vision and depth of sympathy on his part in regard to the work of every department of his church will raise up a host of helpers.

2. The Superintendent

The superintendent is an important man in the organization and growth of a Sunday school, but he does not need to know or be able to do everything. Aside from the pastor, more rests upon him than upon any other individual. A man may serve in the church council and scarcely be known and not often seen, but the superintendent is always before the public, is well known, and his responsibilities are onerous.

He is the pastor's right-hand man. Happy is that school whose spiritual and executive head are "big brothers." The wise superintendent will recognize the authority and leadership of the pastor, and will take counsel with him on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the school. He will not alone welcome him to the sessions of school, but also invite him to a seat on the platform during the opening and closing exercises, and, unless the pastor is otherwise engaged, he should accept the privilege. The influence upon the pupils will be good, and it is a fitting recognition of the place of the pastor.

Four qualifications mark a good superintendent:

First. He should be a Christian, a member of the church and a man of irreproachable character. No matter what other qualifications he may possess, failing here he fails everywhere. He must be respected and looked up to by all who know him. Personal piety is an asset beyond the weight of any other. If it is seen that he cannot be an example to the school, he should be told kindly but firmly to vacate the office. It goes without saying he should be a man of prayer, a good student of the Bible, faithful in attendance upon divine worship, and able to say to others, "Be ye followers of me." He is engaged in the Lord's work, and he cannot be successful at it unless he is in deed and in truth the Lord's servant.

Second. He must be able to work with other people. He is not to do all the work himself. He stands in the center of an organization, and is to say to one person, Do this; to another, Do that; and say it in such a way as to get it done. If he is impatient, self-assertive, jealous of his authority and vindictive, he is totally unable to preserve concord. He simply has to belong to that group of choice souls of whom it is said, "He is easy to work with." To be able to have

your will done without your subordinate knowing it is being done is a fine art. A superintendent may differ on matters of policy from some of his teachers, and yet hold their sincere regard by treating them with uniform courtesy. Order or confusion, harmony or friction, will depend more upon him than upon any other individual.

Third. He must be a good executive. It is to be supposed this trait entered into the reason for his selection. To be a good executive, he must be prompt and regular. If he expects his orders to be obeyed, he must obey them himself. He must have himself in hand, self-possessed, tender and firm. How can one manage hundreds of people of all ages, who himself is not under the strictest authority? He must drill himself into planning his program before entering the school-room. An impromptu order of service begets confusion. He should know what he wants to do and do it, carrying the school with him. He will cultivate those personal traits, such as alertness, hopefulness, enthusiasm and tact, which will preserve order and achieve results if anything will.

Fourth. He should at all times be acquainted with the most approved Sunday school methods. He is regarded as a leader

and he should be able to take his place at the front of the advancing column. He ought to strive so to equip himself that if he is asked for the best thought on any Sunday school problem he is ready with an answer, or, at least, knows where the answer can be found. The methods and principles of religious education are not so profound that the man of ordinary intelligence cannot master them. In many instances, however, the ability exceeds the effort. Pupils are accustomed to the best pedagogical methods in the day schools, and instruction on Sunday will be weakened if obsolete formulæ still obtain with us. Teachers do not feel free to blaze the way, even if they are able to do so. They look to him for that. It is to be supposed that the office sought the man, and that those who were responsible for putting him where he is saw in him capacity for leadership. He should be a diligent student of the best in his line, and a hard worker. It is particularly important that he shall know how to set others to work. There is a criticism not infrequently made of a superintendent that does him credit. It is this: "He is always trying to get other people to do the work." This is his salvation and that of the school. He should be a general issuing orders, and not an errand boy. This is

a mark of a true executive. It will do much to keep the school *en rapport* with himself. The office of the superintendent is fraught with grave responsibilities, and it takes a big man to fill it.

3. The Teacher

There has been not a little unthinking and indiscriminate ridicule hurled at the Sunday school. It has been crystalized in a popular conundrum, running like this: "When is a school not a school?" The answer is supposed to be, "When it is a Sunday school." Most of the criticism of the school has been directed at the teachers. Now, few of our teachers are perfect. They don't claim to have attained. They have not banded themselves together and set themselves up as illustrations of the fine art of teaching. They are conscious of their limitations.

It must be acknowledged that some of them are inefficient, ignorant, stupid, uninterested, incapable of leading young souls to altitudes of sounder thinking and better living. In themselves they are not good illustrations of what the gospel ought to produce. What they are negatives what they say. If those under their instruction follow them they will land in the ditch.

What makes the criticism hurt is not that part of it isn't true, but that too much of it comes from persons who do not attend Sunday school; who do not know its inner workings; who have not weighed its results in fair balances; who have based their sweeping deductions on hearsay, to which they have added an ingredient called prejudice.

The rank and file of our teachers are splendid, consecrated, intelligent men and women. To meet them, mix with them, and study their work, furnishes all the evidence one needs. Possibly if we did less criticising and more praising, we would help them and put ourselves in a position where we could see more in the school worth thinking well of. There are teachers in all schools of whom any institution would be proud. Some of the ministers, missionaries, and other religious leaders in the Church to-day are where they are because they sat at the feet of faithful teachers in the Sunday school. To berate them indiscriminately because a few are ignorant and incompetent, shows bad taste and a confused judgment.

This reminds us of the poem, "The Owl Critic," by Mr. James T. Field, the substance of which has been given us by Dr. E. W. Rice, who says: "Mr. James T. Field has a noted humorous poem, 'The Owl

Critic,' which tells of a conceited youth, who saw what he supposed to be a stuffed owl in the window of a barber shop. With pompous claims for knowledge on owls, he insisted that the owl was badly stuffed, his wing was preposterous, his head not right, his body badly poised, his feathers badly arranged, his claws impossibly curled on the perch, and that if he couldn't stuff an owl better than that he would go out of the taxidermist business. Just then the owl turned its head and blinked, and got down gravely from its perch and hooted at the critic. It was a live owl; and the critic walked down the street, thinking himself a big fool for criticising a live owl."

The Sunday school is not a dead institution, its critics to the contrary notwithstanding; neither is its teaching force destitute of ability and wanting in those qualities which must give permanence to the work done. We welcome criticism, honest, sincere, discriminating criticism. We welcome those who are on the outside to come in. We are willing to learn. There are many who do not know, and hence cannot appreciate what the school is doing. It operates under serious handicaps, which must be considered when any appraisement of the school is given.

We have two challenges to throw out.

First. We challenge any man to point to another institution, no older than the Sunday school, that has attained to the same popular favor and yielded the results to the Church, the home and the state, that the Sunday school has, without becoming a burden to the community. *Second.* We challenge any man to point to an army of workers anywhere, who, without thought of material remuneration, are rendering such intelligent, whole-souled, self-sacrificing and uplifting service as are our Sunday school teachers. No other body of persons is doing more for the Church of Christ and is less appreciated than our teachers.

They are often compared with public school teachers, and always to their disadvantage. True, Sunday school teachers are not as well-trained; they do not have their work as well in hand, from a professional standpoint. Two things, however, are to be said in favor of the Sunday school teachers. First, their average term of service is longer than that of the public school teacher, and second, they serve out of love, receiving no money return. We are not ashamed of the vast majority of Sunday school teachers.

The work of the teacher is a most responsible one. It makes no difference how one looks at it, the place is holy ground. The

dangers attaching to it almost appall us, while the opportunities it offers are big enough to challenge an angel's best.

His text-book is the Bible, the material he works with is the pupil, his helper is the Holy Spirit, his aim is Christlikeness of character, his method is through speech and example, the result of his labor endures forever.

The task assigned the teacher grows in seriousness when he bears in mind that all the religious training some of the learners before him receive they get during the one hour they are in his presence. They come from homes that are not religious. The wear and tear of the street, and sometimes of associates in the public schools, make terrible inroads upon any desire to live for Jesus. The teacher must in one hour establish and reinforce the life of the child so that he will remain true for seven days to the ideals he has learned. It is quite easy to believe that the weakest point in the average teacher is an inadequate conception of what teaching the word of God to perishing souls means. If he realized that the destiny of half a dozen or a dozen souls hinged on the way he did his work, can you imagine he would be tardy, or irregular, or listless, or disinterested, or say before the class, "I

did not have time to prepare my lesson this week," or be satisfied with his present ability? He should be conscious of its serious and heavy responsibility. He is not working with sand or clay or granite, but with deathless spirits.

The saying that teachers are born and not made has done our schools a world of harm. It must be admitted that some people are so gifted and so finely organized that they instinctively teach well. But their number is small. Ninety-five per cent of the teachers are made, not born; and the few who are born teachers can be made much better than what they are. We come into the world with certain gifts and talents, but these need development. Some people are born musicians, others are born artists, others are born poets; but they toil long and hard before they do satisfactory work.

Our teachers need the anointed vision and the kindling of the fires of ambition. They must reach and climb. They must keep their goals out of the dust. They must be made to see that it is better farther on. The teacher who does not aspire is thereby disqualified. As a rule, the best teachers want to improve, the weaker ones are satisfied.

A prominent pastor announced that he had organized a teacher-training class, and

was surprised to see that his highest-ranking teachers were the first to join. But should such a thing be surprising? A mark of an able teacher is the desire to avail himself of anything that will help him grow. There is more hope of a person who ranks lower, but develops, than of that one who has ability but stands still. We would lift ourselves clean above mediocrity if our teachers would move out of ruts and lead the way to easily accessible heights. As long as it remains true that eighty-five per cent of the success of the Sunday school depends on its teachers, we must touch, mold, instruct and inspire them before we dare even hope for any really great advance.

Sunday school teachers should be men and women of conviction. They must know what they believe and why. To them the Bible must be the word of God, and its central figure, Jesus Christ, the only hope for sinful man. They must be able to say about the saving truths the Scriptures set forth, "I believe." They may have a professional knowledge of the Bible and be students of child nature, and be able to present the truth to the growing mind, but that is not enough. They are compelled to say, "Upon this truth I stand, my faith is pinned to it." This is so reasonable. Any argument to the

contrary needs no refutation.

A teacher should love the Bible and seek a daily acquaintance with its contents; he should love his pupils, otherwise he is not likely to feed and tend them well; he should love his work and be an enthusiast in it; he should know that he teaches more by his example than by his words, and that religion is received more by absorption than by direct instruction. He should be what he wants his pupils to be, and he should be that first. It is necessary for him to be endowed with an extra amount of patience and grit and tact. He must really try to understand the child, by studying the environment in and outside the home, by listening to the child's stories and getting his viewpoint, and by remembering his own childhood days. There should be a sincerity about all he does.

And he must know Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. The incompetency of the unspiritual need not be dwelt on at length. He must be a man of God. This might not be quite so important if his work was limited to the one hour's work per week; but he is teaching, literally teaching seven days a week by his example; and he would be surprised to know how often he is in the minds of his pupils during these days, and how, both consciously and unconsciously, they are re-

producing him. He is living in other personalities, and when he is dead they will keep alive and hand on the impress he gave them.

It is God's way. When He wanted to reveal Himself to us He did not send us a book, He did not give us a map of Palestine, He did not tell us what His Son would do *were* He to come to earth. No, none of these nor all of them would do. He sent His Son, and said, "Look on Him and see what I am." And that method is in force to-day. Saving truth is communicated through Christian personality. The teacher must be more than a pedagogue, or a psychologist, or an interpreter of cold facts. He is the pupil's model, the pupil's Bible. It is a great thing to be a teacher, a consecrated, efficient teacher. Outside the home and the pastoral office there is nothing to my mind equal to it.

There is fear that the new emphasis put on the study of child nature, and the popularization of the most recent methods of Sunday school work, and the insistence on teacher-training, will obscure the fundamental and crowning thing—the Christian personality of the teacher. No specialist has intended that it should be so, but the stressing of child study and methods has shifted

the point of emphasis, and misled a few, who now think they see a great light and at last have put their feet on the royal road to success as teachers.

Teachers must be men and women of recognized piety and genuine Christian experience. For teaching is letting one's light shine. It is telling to others what has already been incorporated into our being. It is giving permission to others to copy our lives. It is the uncovering of scars we have won in the service of the Lord Jesus. It is nothing less than Christ incarnate anew in us, walking, serving, warning, loving, helping and saving. That makes teaching in its totality of speech, conduct and unconscious influence so important.

When a storm sweeps across the sea and rolls and threatens the vessel, the captain will keep his eye on the star, if it can be seen, and on the delicate needle, but the passengers read danger or safety in the face of the captain. We keep our eyes on Jesus, but it is altogether probable that our pupils have their eyes on us most of the time.

It is next to impossible to tell of all the advantages the modern Sunday school is enjoying. We could not return to the old regime without the surrender of many precious and profitable acquisitions. Were our

fathers to step into an up-to-date school, they would see little similarity, in outward form, at least, between it and what they knew. And yet is it not true that they had splendid Christian men and women for teachers, just as we have, and that in this respect they were not far behind us?

It is not true to say that the Sunday school has been a failure because some of the fundamental principles of education have been ignored. No one will decry the need for the study of child psychology and modern methods. But it must not be forgotten that even though we should carry over into the Sunday school all that is best in the public school, we will fail utterly unless our teachers are living examples of that gospel they would impart to others. There are schools, and not a few, that are introducing everything new they hear about, and yet are obtaining no larger results than formerly. On the other hand, there are schools that are backward and ill-equipped, but they are getting results. There are first things, second things and third things in the Sunday school, and each must be given its place. If we lean too heavily on mere methods they will crumble beneath the weight.

There must be religious fires within the machinery of a school, a spirit among the

wheels. The largest message a teacher can deliver is what he is. His inconsistencies are counted against him and the cause he represents. Give us half a dozen teachers that love Christ and the Bible and the children, and we will undertake to build a school anywhere. You and I have had such teachers. They stand out in our lives. We may not remember as much of their instruction as we should, but the shadow of their great souls falls over us to this day.

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